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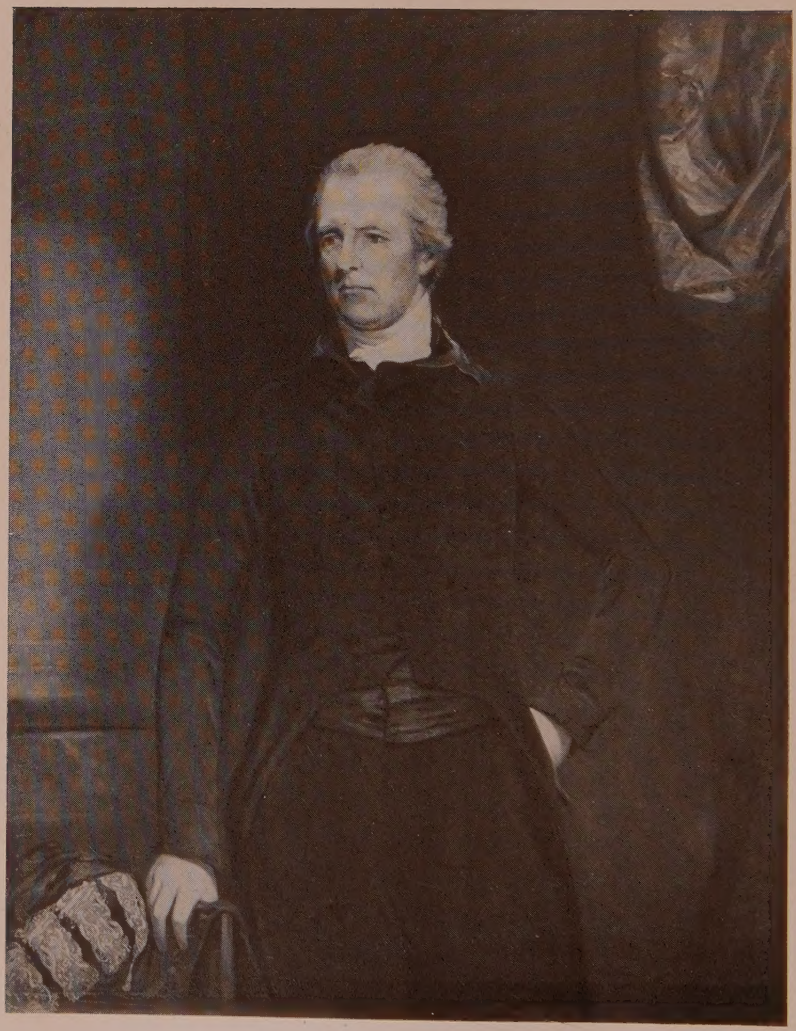

WILLIAM PITT

From the portrait by John Hoppner, R.A., in the National Gallery, London. Painted in 1805 shortly before the Premier's death.

ENGLAND'S GREATEST STATESMAN

A Life of William Pitt

1759-1806

By

E. KEBLE CHATTERTON

Illustrated

Indianapolis
THE BOBBS-MERRILL CO.
Publishers

River Forest, Illinois

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First Edition

Printed in the United States of America

PRESS OF
BRAUNWORTH & CO., INC.
BOOK MANUFACTURERS
BROOKLYN, N. Y.

4930

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PREFACE

I HAVE endeavored in this volume to present a picture of one whose career was as brief in years as it was long and brilliant in achievement. Throughout the political history of England no figure surpasses that of William Pitt for his combination of talents, and for the grave tasks which he was called on to perform in guiding the Ship of State through the worst storms that ever shook the country.

My aim has been to show him not merely as the mainspring of a political machine but as a human being and leader of men; as one who trained his frail body to become a mighty international force. The problems of to-day are in some measure the reconstructive difficulties with which he was faced; and the study of the past is a wholesome and invigorating standard by which to make comparisons. For, underlying Pitt's age and ours, must be acknowledged a burning desire for the expansion and expression of liberty.

I have relied very largely on the original Chatham manuscripts in the Public Record Office, and such sources as the Rutland manuscripts, Dropmore manuscripts, Carlisle manuscripts, Lothian manuscripts, Lonsdale manuscripts, Charlemont manuscripts, Kenyon manuscripts, Stopford-Sackville manuscripts, Palk manuscripts, as well as the valuable archives, dealing with smuggling, in the keeping of the Board of Customs. I have consulted the lives of Pitt by Tomline, Stanhope, Rosebery, Lord Ashbourne and Dr. Holland Rose; the *Dictionary of National Biography,* Traill and Mann's *Social England,* the *Correspondence of William Pitt, Earl of Chatham,* edited by Taylor and Pringle. Acknowledgment will

be found in the respective chapters; but if in any case this has been neglected, I beg that it may not be regarded as intentional.

With the exception of the four portraits from the National Gallery; and those of the Prince of Wales, Mrs. Fitzherbert and Lord Nelson from the British Museum; the illustrations have been reproduced by permission of the Parker Gallery, Berkeley Square, London.

E. KEBLE CHATTERTON.

ENGLAND'S GREATEST STATESMAN

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Chapter I

THE PITT PERIOD

When we are invited by the novelist or the playwright to consider the momentous incidents centering round a leading character, when we watch the gradual unfolding of the story with its compact neatness, its stressed essentials, its sustained interest, its economy of treatment, and steady upward advance to a climax followed shortly by a swift dénouement, we have the feeling that, however deeply our emotions have been roused, the inciting force derives its power as much from art as from nature. We are, however, in the mood to be influenced, for we know that the careers of most people have their dull periods, which must be omitted if our attention is to be retained. Thus it is expected of the narrator that he be selective, logical, progressive and dramatic in his presentation. We have asked him to give us not slices of realism, but a polished well-balanced, closely compressed yarn within a conventional form. It is only after we exercise our critical faculties that we remark: "Yes, an excellent report of a certain person's difficulties and activities. But how many of us ever live with such consistent directness toward a definite goal? How few of us could ever expect to step straight into a great ready-made drama, and then fade out as soon as the crisis no longer demands our existence?"

Now, in the comparatively brief time between the birth and death of the younger William Pitt there is to

be found a most surprising directness of purpose and achievement. Opportunity, preparation for a tremendous duty, personal endowment and a clear consciousness of political vocation, were in his case able to create such a perfect synthesis that there is no waiting, no waste of effort. He knew from his boyhood exactly for what rôle in life he was suited. He began training and rehearsing at once, and the moment he had learned to act his part he stepped straight on to a stage that was already set for him. The story in each scene became of greater intensity, his personality occupied the entire spotlight, on him depended the great decisions which belong to a protagonist. The world's audience looked to him with suspense, were roused by his reaction to immense situations; and then, after the final and tensest minutes of all had ended in triumph, Pitt disappeared forever when death summoned him away.

To few men in the world's history has it been granted, as indeed was Pitt's fortune, to act in front of a backcloth so rich in epic colors, so variegated with the deep blue tints of the Mediterranean, the rich green of the Atlantic, or the muddy shallow grays of the English Channel. From the Baltic to the West Indies, from India to England the scene keeps shifting with undiminished drama. Everything is on the grand scale, the fate of nations is poised dangerously, waiting for big results that will decide the future of civilization. Nothing is certain, Europe and America hold their breath in suspense, colossal fleets meet and clash, revolutions and reforms stagger the most imaginative minds. But even in an age that saw Nelson and Napoleon, William Pitt remains outstanding, the cool and experienced pilot steering the Ship of State through perils and difficulties till the end.

How often we perceive the pathos of a great man

outliving his utility and the world's hospitality! Bonaparte's career was concluded in the dullest anti-climax. Happy those who, like Nelson and Pitt, could pass away at the height of their glory in brilliant effulgence. There are times when problems to the individual, no less than to a nation, appear so numerous and so weighty as almost to break down every reserve of courage. But history then comes kindly to our aid in showing us that nothing, after all, is new: that people in the past have been obstructed with similar problems but have surmounted them at last. No human being could ever on his two shoulders be expected to bear more anxieties, or heavier, than Pitt was called on to sustain; and he wins our concentration the more readily when we consider alike his youth and his feeble constitution.

But neither technical training nor lucky opportunity alone could enable Pitt to become, ere he had reached his twenty-fifth birthday, the most powerful man in the whole of Europe. That he so attained and remained, that he continued to dominate difficulties domestic and foreign, that he could impose his will over big-minded men and command the approbation of the multitude at times of national emergency, all this resulted from the possession of a certain character. Before we can appreciate fully Pitt's life and work, we must needs first see the make-up of his mental and moral nature from which proceeded such sound judgment that even in this twentieth century he is regarded with widest admiration. It is a terrible thing to be judged unfavorably by posterity, after contemporary opinion has long since bestowed its wreaths of laurel. Indeed, few sights are more grotesque to-day than the statues in our public places of those who were once esteemed eminent though now are reckoned as unworthy. The eighteenth century bequeathed us too many

instances of such memorials, but no visitor to Westminster Abbey denies to William Pitt his right to be numbered among the unusually eminent.

Since character is partly inherited and partly acquired, let us now discover what in him was congenital and what was obtained by outside influences. There is in psychology no such thing as an absolute beginning, and the fallacy of the white-sheet-of-paper metaphor was never more effectually illustrated than in the younger Pitt. If ever pedigree required positive proof, it is here before our very eyes. Like father, like son, we may very truthfully assert of the two Pitts as far as temperament, capacity and instinct are hereditary. Thus it was that the younger statesman derived a proud trait which could never be called a virtue; but an austerity of manner, strict morality, high rectitude, together with a devastating oratorical ability had been handed down likewise. Both understood the value of causing a dramatic effect, but if the father aimed at raising his country by military effort, it was the son who sought to see her economically great. Both, however, were the sincerest of patriots. If the younger Pitt, by force of circumstances, found himself compelled to set free the dogs of war against England's enemies, he remained fundamentally a minister of peace-with-prosperity.

As no man can deny the truth that environment most powerfully affects his interior character, let us obtain a mental picture of eighteenth-century England and then see to what extent both father and son were inheritors, how the spirit and ideals of the age exercised over them certain tendencies which were neither wholly good nor entirely bad. Most fascinating is it to note how clearly were to be observed in the younger Pitt those distinguishing marks of personality which had come down through

several generations of the family from the seventeenth century; and to watch how these became modified in the middle-aged man whose death occurred in the early nineteenth century. Actions proceed from habit, and react on habit by strengthening it; and the Pitt family habit will be noticed merely readapting itself to a particular period. Even the element of bodily weakness is a repeating concomitant, but alongside this will be found an irresistible energy of soul always ready to express itself practically, and ever on the look-out for the big chance.

If we cared to choose for study some notable family founded during the last couple of centuries, one that amassed a certain amount of wealth but continued to add distinction in succeeding generations, we should not fail to perceive that the initial ancestor was a man of outstanding character, possessing especially superior mental caliber, more than ordinary courage, strong independence, persistent patience and dauntless self-reliance. Notwithstanding that nature is wayward, and the child may inherit on his maternal side contrary tendencies, yet for a couple of hundred years it is usually not difficult to trace the red line which indicates this exceptional superiority. After a while the redness pales off, a kind of family anemia sets in, the energy disappears, great achievements cease to accumulate. But imitation is one of the earliest, deepest and most lasting instincts; and the lad who in the course of his formative years is made aware of the definite and traditional deeds associated with his lineage will have the inclination, at least, to uphold that habit by repeated acts. Thus, in spite of the difference in economic conditions between the days of Charles II and George III, there is no disguising the stereotyped likeness of essential qualities shared by Governor Thomas Pitt and his great-grandson, William the younger.

Now, that which we call the eighteenth century began in effect, as far as England is concerned, with the Revolution of 1688. Modern history starts with that date because the era is introduced of fundamental changes which presently were to transform every human activity. Immediately, the effect of 1688 was threefold: to destroy the Stuart theory of a king's divine right, to reassert the principles of the English constitution, and to give Parliament the power to guide the nation's policy. But mediately this Revolution was the example to be followed by the Russians in 1762, by the English colonies of America in 1776, by Sweden in 1772 and 1809, by Holland in 1795 and 1813, by Poland in 1704, 1795 and 1830, by France in 1789, to say nothing of what has happened in more recent times to various European other countries. Nothing succeeds like success, and few movements among men are so subversive as a change in government or reformation in religion. It is like some wonderful toy top, which goes on spinning and traveling for a long while till the impulse is finally exhausted.

While it would be permissible to trace this modern restless desire for violent change and new forms even as far back as the Renaissance, yet it was the reign of James II which inaugurated the New Age that was to reverse the conditions of English life in every department. Not merely politics, but the Navy and Army, the Mercantile Marine, commerce, art, architecture, home life, social customs, literature, dress, manners, science, medicine, economic ideals, finance, religious thought, legislation, parliamentary representation, industry, labor, hygiene, penal systems, treatment of the poorer classes, education—every one of these was destined eventually to come under the influence of the new thought. However we care to name it, this was a liberty movement, a

triumph of the people against irresponsible and arbitrary power.

The most stagnant mentality is found in any community which has never traveled beyond its boundaries. England had remained ignorant and contented and undeveloped until she had ocean-going ships plus a sufficient number of deep-sea navigators able to find their way to distant lands by ascertaining the latitude. When once long voyages became frequent, new lands were discovered, trade was set up, colonies were set going, minds were broadened; fresh ideas galvanized dull imaginations, and an inquiring habit was given every encouragement. Two of the oldest institutions in the country were the authority of the Pope and the authority of the King. But the former had disappeared during the reign of Henry VIII; the execution of Charles I had completed the severance of the old, accepted and unquestioned beliefs. Thus, when the people of England found that they could go even one step farther and successfully invite William of Orange to take the place of James II, without recourse to the scaffold, and finally ended the century-old struggle between King and Parliament, there was no apparent limit to what individualism could do in the future.

We are to be in a position of realizing the kind of England that was waiting for the younger Pitt's guiding hand when he took over the pilotage in the latter part of the eighteenth century. Before that youthful statesman was born, however, the country passed through another period of stagnation such as had not occurred since the Middle Ages. But it was of only a generation's length, and this intervening lethargy becomes perfectly comprehensible when we consider the bustle and excitement during the days of Tudors and Stuarts. No individual or nation can be expected to keep on at high

speed all the time; there must come an interval for rest before taking another series of leaps.

After all the excitements, the shocks, the anxieties, the unrest, the suspense and uncertainty of the past, England longed for peace, quietness, stability and assurance. The desire was to live gently and let live; to consolidate what had been gained by the Revolution slowly but effectually; to restore unity, keep the Crown subordinate to Parliament, and to have no nerve-wracking alarms such as the abrupt dissolutions which had marked the seventeenth century so severely. The Act of Toleration, passed as early as 1689, granting liberty of worship and affording Non-conformists a recognized place, well illustrates the new spirit.

But for half a century this developed into a dull, materialistic, self-complacent and unprogressive age, which required all the vigorous energy of two Pitts to revive national glory and allow the national renaissance to pursue its course after suspended activity. During five decades, after the Revolution, England was nominally stationary, which is to say that she was drifting backward steadily. If we except politics and literature, there was little that could rouse the minds of even the least slothful. All initiative seemed to have been taken away from her, apathy had taken its place, precedent and uninspired conventionalism were the regulating ideals. Everything was flat, passive, tame, heavy. From all corporate bodies the very life-giving energy seemed to have escaped: a stolid, quiescent immutability and a total inability to adapt, became the rule of existence. That was why before very long another revolution, another reform movement, must inevitably be inaugurated.

For the Church of England was comatose, enthusiasm ceased to exist, except in the negative sense of anti-Papal

hatred, and for this animosity James II was largely to blame. The Act of Toleration, the great charter of religious freedom, was merely a logical extension of the Renaissance liberty and of the Reformation. But in practise, freedom is one of the most dangerous human temptations, because it is not readily disposed to respect discipline. In politics it may become anarchy, in the Army and Navy it may lead to mutiny, in ecclesiastical organization it may develop into sheer latitudinarianism. And thus the country was to pass now through a period of individualism, which quite easily was to be colored by irreligion, just as in Bolshevik Russia to-day a violent Revolution is seen to be followed by a complete denial of Christianity. But the English Revolution of 1688 had been not violent, and the forces of irreligion gathered themselves quietly and slowly. And as the English Church sank into spiritual slumber, so its sons and daughters, its lower clergy and its bishops became politicians animated by the strife which separated Whigs from Tories. The result was that when parishioners perceived that the parson and his bishop were more concerned with personal preferment than the shepherding of souls, all interest in religion evaporated from the lay mind; or, at the best, the individual was left to his own resources, in the absence of authority, to work out his own theories biased by pious and partizan tracts or pamphlets of propagandists.

We have plenty of evidence concerning the condition into which the Church had sunk in the post-Revolutionary period. For example we may cite instances afforded by the diary of Thomas Turner which shows how a Sussex layman living in a quiet village viewed this slackness. Thus only two years before the younger Pitt was born, Turner writes: "I must acknowledge that the idle, lazy

way of preaching which many of our clergy are got into, seems rather to prove self-interest to be the motive of the exercising their profession, than the eternal happiness and salvation of mankind." Turner tells how the local Rector would be as bad as any of themselves in "dancing or jumping about, without violin or any musick, singing of foolish healths, and drinking all the time as fast as it could be well poured down" till three in the morning, and then going on to another house to revel and drink till three in the afternoon. Even on Saturday night the parson would entertain his guests till many of them were very drunk and began pulling off "wigs, caps and hats." Turner gives us such illuminating remarks as the following entries: "Sunday, 28th. We had a sermon preached by a young clergyman just come to be curate at Laughton . . . and I think if the young gentleman's morals are good, he will in time make a fine man. . . . Jan. 4, 1761. No service at our church in the morning, on account of the death of Mrs. Porter. . . . Oct. 31. No service at our church in the morning or afternoon. . . . Nov. 25. Mr.——, the curate of Laughton . . . dined with me, and also staid in the afternoon till he got in liquor, and being so complaisant as to keep him company, I was quite drunk. How I detest myself for being so foolish."* And what impecunious fisherman who made a living by running brandy across the English Channel, landing it by night to evade the preventive officers, could believe that it was wrong to cheat the Government when the squire and the parson financed smuggling?

While the English eighteenth-century character, with its lowered religious tone, its coarse living and gross ideals, its gambling, its oaths and obscenities, its drunken

* *The Diary of Thomas Turner*, edited by F. M. Turner, London, 1925.

revelings and libertinism, lost its healthy outlook, a long series of penal acts were passed repressive of Roman Catholicism. To what extent Pitt was to concern himself with the emancipation of Roman Catholics we shall in due course consider. For the present it is well to emphasize one simple fact which explains the dull neglect, the frozen formalism, the smug self-satisfaction, the depressing stuffiness which had come over the Anglican church, and the narrow-mindedness of its children. After a brief period of active aspiration during the reign of Queen Anne, we have the heavy Hanoverian unimaginative spirit, which suspected any expression of zeal and enthusiasm as dangerous manifestation. For the emotions were such things as incited riots and kept alive the peril of Jacobitism; therefore there must be none of this fervor which could only result in fanaticism. If a man had energy to spare, let him use it to show that he was a loyal Whig.

It was not respectable to become enthusiastic outside politics. Moreover, until a couple of years after the younger Pitt was born, no Tory cleric could expect to be raised to the episcopal rank. So it came to this: politics were supreme, dominating English life; and from the time of the Hanoverian succession the chief power in the land lay in the tyranny of a few Whig families. It followed that as long as he were a Whig politically, a cleric might be raised to a bishopric no matter whether he were almost a Unitarian in his latitudinarianism or a worldling with no future intention other than enjoying a big comfortable house, a competent income and provision for his family.

Bishops were not appointed because of their peculiar gifts as organizers and rulers of pastoral work, but for their loyalty in rendering political service; and

Wakeman* quotes the case of Bishop Hoadly who never once set foot in his diocese of Bangor, and of Bishop Watson of Llandaff who found it more convenient to live in Westmoreland with all interest centered in agriculture.

The Whigs kept suppressed all zeal for religious movement in the Anglican church, aiming to flatten out any excitement or high ideals. Those Whigs who lived in comfortable and stately homes, who enjoyed the green restfulness of their parks, who overate themselves, debauched themselves with too much wine, punch, brandy and strong beer, who gambled and hunted, rode about in the splendor of their coaches, developed gout and fiery quarrelsome tempers, made pompous speeches in Parliament, patronized the poor as lower orders in creation, occupied high-backed pews on Sunday when the whitewashed, dry-rotting church building was once a week open; these rulers of England's destiny had no wish to be bothered or annoyed by deep emotional feeling, whether expressed by churchmen or any other people. Thus activity in this sphere was discouraged, all corporate religious life was rendered impossible, corruption and immorality became universal, but disguised by a quiet moderation, an artificial calm.

This aspect of the eighteenth century must of necessity be stressed, for it explains the decadence in other spheres. At the top there was an arrogant exclusiveness dictating and controlling. It was not lacking in dignity, but it was brutal and merciless. It respected intellect and good breeding, but it had little sympathy with conscience or devotion. Authority must be invoked rather than affection, and it must be deadly impersonal. The conception was psychologically unsound, for it omitted to cater

**An Introduction to the History of the Church of England,* by Henry Offley Wakeman. London, 1898.

for heart and soul, emotions and sentiment, which, after all, are the impelling power in all great movements. A curious blindness seems to have prevented our rulers in high places from seeing that the same human feeling which can cause riots, mutinies, revolutions, and depose kings, could be equally capable of lively progress and healthy reform.

So, while insincere ecclesiastics fished for rectories, deaneries and bishoprics, but universities and schools sank into corrupt inefficiency, with the result that comparatively few intellectual supermen were produced during the first half of the century; peers' palaces, complete with portraits and sea-paintings, statuary, prints and Italian gardens, multiplied as the country's wealth rapidly increased, thanks to more numerous ships and overseas trading. For the sick and suffering, the unfortunate and enslaved, there was little sympathy. Prisons and workhouses were degrading and brutal in systems and results. Slavery still appeared justifiable, and indeed advisable.

Amid all this laxity there was growing up a moneyed aristocracy which at first caused the old landed gentry indignation and jealous annoyance, but by the middle of the century the latter had become reconciled with the former. The Whig rule was that of capitalists; and dissenters, having obtained recognition, were now becoming prosperous. But literature and art were under the heel of unimaginative and arbitrary artificiality, and healthy sentiment being taboo, the esthetic tendency was to become sickly sentimental. On the other hand the caricaturists interpreted the violence of animosities, the cruelty of satire, no less than a contemptuous regard for the opposite side.

In place of the Stuart system had been introduced a Whig rule which, till the time of the third George,

seemed to discountenance any kind of originality. Vigorous rhetoric, a fine flow of vehement oaths, a melodramatic gesture, a flamboyant style were calculated to carry a member of Parliament a long way. A stolid conservatism, which would allow not even the reformation of its own abuses, and respected old institutions merely for their antiquity yet not for their intrinsic value, would some day need a wide-spread revolution of a special strength. An unenlightened fidelity to classical models in architecture and decoration, but without the essential inspiration, led to reproduction of the same deadlines we have noted in other respects. Poetry was practically lifeless. Medicine remained in a state of unscientific torpor; practitioners still believed that the sun and moon influenced human bodies, and the patients would believe anything. Foolish proverbs, childish superstitions, old wives' tales, were respected with a ridiculous reverence. Happily the last of the plagues had been that of 1665, when seventy thousand people perished in London. But ague, smallpox, typhus—especially jail fever and ship fever—were serious problems. Inoculation against smallpox had however done excellent preventive work before the first half of this eighteenth century had been passed.

Hygiene—the science of health embracing the laws of personal fitness, diet, the time for work and recreation, exercise, ventilation, pure water, sunlight, sanitation, fresh air, cleanliness of mind, body and dwelling-place—was not considered till the century was almost ending. The jails were narrow unlit underground pest-houses, where prisoners were crowded together amid straw and unmentionable filth, so that fever was readily bred and in due course carried into court where witnesses, barristers, juries and judges became infected. The Army

was disease-ridden, the Navy and Mercantile Marine were cursed with scurvy till Captain Cook's epoch-making voyage, which showed that the use of lime-juice, together with regard for cleanliness and protection against weather, could ward off ill-health. In those terrible hulks, of which the engravers have left us so many illustrations, in the convict ships which took out to Australia unfortunate creatures, in naval shore prisons as well, human beings were treated and fed with such utter disrespect for health that fevers continued to breed with every facility. As to smallpox, this highly infectious and contagious fever became so prevalent during the eighteenth century as to be responsible for one-tenth of the whole mortality. Contemporary artists have not hesitated to indicate pock-disfigured faces, which were in fact not singular but all too common till long after Edward Jenner (1749-1823) proved the protective effects of vaccination.

Likewise, surgery was of the crudest, for enterprise was thwarted, and the avenue to knowledge obstructed. So stolidly conservative, so repressively unprogressive had it continued that its practitioners were allied to the London barbers from 1540 till 1745 when the surgeons broke away. They had been subordinated to the physicians, and so continued even till well into the nineteenth century. But apart from the drawback of having to endure excessive control, their chief difficulty lay in the difficulty of obtaining bodies for purposes of dissection. The result was that further knowledge of anatomy was well-nigh impossible to be obtained. Similarly, the eighteenth century began with very little knowledge of chemistry and ended with the revelation of only minor laws. Still, the discovery of oxygen, and considerable amount of experimental work establishing important gen-

eralizations, made possible the great advance which came with the nineteenth century.

Ever since the confidence and settlement which followed the Revolution of 1688, England had begun to expand rapidly in wealth and commerce. It was the logical result of the Elizabethan voyages and of other ventures in the following reign, notably to North America, the West Indies and the East Indies. But the unhappy political restlessness at home during Stuart times had delayed the profits accruing. Now, however, that the Anglo-Dutch wars had passed and trading expeditions could be multiplied, cargoes of tobacco be fetched regularly from Virginia, spices, silks, tea and other valuable goods from the Orient, English merchants began to amass those riches which pioneers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries had barely been able to enjoy. The country had been poor even down to Jacobean days, but at last all the accumulated maritime undertakings had been proved in general to have been worth while.

The history of the Pitts is so intimately bound up with this post-Revolution shipping prosperity, especially with regard to India, and the marvelous awakening which occurred in England at the close of the eighteenth century is so directly to be traced back to this seafaring, that we shall miss the most essential feature if we do not conjure up in our minds those three-masted wooden ships with their topsails and topgallantsails, their high-steeved bowsprits, their rows of gunports, their crews of boisterous sailormen, and their mostly illiterate hard-handling officers. They believed in themselves, in their vessels, in their own country, but in little else. They were the means of bringing home from across the seas so much salable merchandise that London's big-business men were able to purchase large estates in different parts of the

country, live the rest of their years in luxury, keep coaches and servants, found families, buy themselves advowsons, erect family vaults in the village churches, marry their sons and daughters into the peerage and then drink themselves to death.

Thus originated through the risks of the sea and the persistent pluck of sailors so many of those charming eighteenth-century houses in London, in various ports and in villages, and at the end of some sweeping carriage drive that is shut off from the countryside by a pair of tall iron gates and a long encircling wall. Thus, too, the metropolis was attracting not only increasing commerce from foreign countries but, for its own immediate sustenance, cattle from most of the English counties. In the village cottages went on the industry of spinning, weaving and dressing cloth, while along the entire south coast prospered that illicit occupation of smuggling.

But all this sudden wealth could scarcely be said to have raised the morals of English people. The influence of tobacco and strong drink was anything but beneficial. Ever since the days of Charles II this had been getting worse, though the improved trade and long series of good harvests during the reigns of the first two Georges, the large exports of corn, the growing industry of northern England, the prevailing low prices, had all contrived to give landsmen greater material prosperity. But in like manner there had come much more drunkenness. During the first two decades of the eighteenth century it was chiefly the wealthy classes who could afford to get drunk, though sometimes a vessel (such as *The Good Luck of Camphire* in the autumn of 1734 which reached the East Anglian coast from Holland) would smuggle ashore as many as one hundred sixty-six half-ankers of brandy at a time without paying duty. As a

4930

half-anker held three and one-fourth gallons, it meant that some of the Norfolk men would be able to get their drinks cheaply. But it was especially gin which was ruining the poorer class and causing so much drunkenness with corresponding disease. For the sum of twopence it was possible to obtain enough to guarantee complete intoxication for one man. Legislation failed to arrest the evil, proving the impossibility of making a nation sober by Act of Parliament. Thus the consumption of British spirits went up from three million five hundred thousand gallons in 1727 to eleven million in 1751. The population of England at that time was about two millions less than the whole of London's population to-day; but dating from about the year when the younger Pitt was born, the rate of increase was rapid.

Now under the Georges the public revenue was obtained by means of Customs and Excise, land-tax, window-tax and stamps. Hence followed increased smuggling, frauds, riots, abuses, unfairness and ill-health. With regard to the first, smuggling by the year 1745 had reached a most serious pitch, notwithstanding all the efforts of the Board of Customs and Excise, to say nothing of the Admiralty and the military. The consumption of tea, for instance, had become so enormous that this was undermining health. But while it was reckoned that about four million pounds of tea were consumed in the kingdom, about three million two hundred thousand pounds thereof had come in without ever having paid any duty. Most of it was sailed across in cutters of about fifty tons from Flushing to Folkestone. Sometimes as many as thirty cargoes a week would be thus landed, the dealers paying the smugglers eight shillings a pound. Of the six million inhabitants of England, at least twenty thousand were earning a living by smuggling. The only

way to discourage this traffic was to take sixpence off the tea tax and thus make the risk not worth while.

The twentieth-century bootlegger is not more enterprising than his English predecessor of two hundred years ago. And allowing for the comparative shortage of money, the financial size of Georgian smuggling transactions amazes us. Robert Hanning, for instance, had made such a fortune by the year 1746 that he could retire from the business. He admitted that he had sold in a year to be run secretly into the country teas, brandies and wines to the extent of forty thousand pounds. This was from Dunkirk alone. Another organization of five sailing cutters used to bring secretly six tons of tea and two thousand half-ankers of brandy every week to the coast of Kent and Sussex. This meant that nearly three thousand pounds in specie was being taken out of England every few days. Five other cutters working from Holland made it possible in conjunction with the other five, which sailed from Boulogne, to bring in a twelvemonth three hundred and three thousand, six hundred and eighty pounds' worth of goods which never paid a penny to the Customs. All this was done with a boldness and determination, an insolence and a certain amount of bloodshed, considerable skill of seamanship and disguise, so that the modern rum-runner seems a mere innocent simpleton in his methods. Large gangs of two hundred men would even in daylight openly bring the goods through the flat country of Thanet with horses well-laden, and defy the authorities. Merchants, mayors and aldermen interested in honest trading of course protested, but the illegal practise went on round the coast. It was impossible for the revenue cutters, or the preventive men ashore, to cope with desperate adventurers of such ingenious cunning.

The national character was, judged by our present-

day standards, savage. A healthy, moral public opinion, which is worth far more than all the laws and police measures can effect, was singularly absent. At the top was an inert society, string-pulling, intriguing for its own particular interests, caring little for the country's intellectual or moral progress, remaining passive to existing conditions. At the bottom of the social scale there was exhibited open robbery and violence ashore and afloat. George I, with his preference for coarse women, George II with his gross humor and rude language, were expressive of the boorish manners and behavior till Lord Chesterfield's fine manners, tact, wit and fascinating culture encouraged a stilted but insincere politeness in English society.

We can see these early eighteenth-century men with their wigs now much shorter than in the pre-Restoration days. Here comes a Georgian gentleman with dark tie-wig, wearing a plain coat, waistcoat, breeches of snuff-colored cloth. But for ceremonial occasions behold him in a lavender suit, silk stockings, silver-embroidered waistcoat, ruffles, lace frills, powdered wig, and gold buckles on his shoes. To-night at a fancy dress ball or a masquerade he is to appear with no little self-assertiveness. Vauxhall Gardens, which had been opened in the year of the Restoration, but had afterwards been closed, were again flourishing in 1736, and Ranelagh Gardens were open six years later.

In those days of blind subservience to precedent it was difficult to rouse much interest for any social indulgence more lofty than gambling, drinking, dueling, raffles, lotteries and political scheming. There was no encouragement from either the first or second George for the nobler pursuits of taste. George I, with his completely German mentality and sympathy, could neither

speak English properly nor inspire intellectual progress. George II, who was hen-pecked, positively loathed books. And there was little enough encouragement for the drama. Drury Lane Theater, after passing through vicissitudes, was the cause of an historic riot four years before the younger Pitt's birth; the mob wrecked the place because the company had included "Papists and Frenchmen." John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera* was so well received that for a season it banished Italian opera from London, and five years later Covent Garden Theater was opened by John Rich in 1732. It was the latter who fathered English pantomime and spectacular drama.

Right from the first, Covent Garden became the bitter rival of Drury Lane, but very few people of that period were playgoers. Some of the fashionable world pretended to like opera, and Handel's *Rinaldo* was produced at the Haymarket Theater in 1711, with quite unusual magnificence. But his oratorios, *Messiah, Samson, Judas Maccabæus* and others, had by the end of the first half of this eighteenth century still further hindered the English fashionable public from encouraging the drama. Thus, instead of a sane outlet for the emotions, there was little left besides card-playing, and even women of good birth became notorious gamblers. There was hardly any encouragement for reading good literature, studying the arts, or even exchanging intellectual conversation.

Roads were very few and very bad, highwaymen were always on the alert, footpads were busy, shopkeepers were frequently robbed by thieves, and even the passer-by would find his wig suddenly snatched from his head. Coaches as they drove through districts that to-day form the most respectable suburbs of London, such as Hamp-

stead, were stopped and their passengers relieved of valuables. No class had any genuine love of law and order; every person was out for himself. Against the pride, the self-esteem and social intolerance of the aristocracy existed the terrible destitution, violence and utter degradation of the poor. Foul language, a readiness to perjury, immorality were common to both classes. There was no such thing as a loftiness of ideals, little consciousness of the things which make life noble and tolerable. The London-Bristol mail was robbed every week, the scarcely-lit streets of London encouraged the starving to lie in wait for gamblers homeward-bound with their winnings. Human bodies were reckoned so cheaply that the punishment of being sent to be hanged at one of the weekly Tyburn executions, or of being sent out to work as a slave in North America, was whacked out indiscriminately. It was typical of the great social barrier which existed in the minds of the ruling classes.

In the country practically the only means of getting about was on horseback, and in winter times such roads as existed were bogged. Behind the husband sat his wife jogging uncomfortably along. Such methods of locomotion discouraged all tendency to go outside the village, which remained consequently in a state of undeveloped, unilluminated stupor. As long as the villagers had their pipes and tobacco, their beer and gin, their boiled beef and carrots, their boiled ducks and chickens, their roast geese, hams, chicken pasties, minced veal and sausages when crops were good, they cared not for the outside world. Unable to sign their own names, they would persuade some one who could read and write to make up their land-tax or window-tax book for them. There were occasional national rejoicings when the Navy or Army had won a notable feat of arms; bonfires would be

lighted, cannon fired, barrels of beer given to the populace, and a good supper provided for the tradesmen of the parish, followed by that excessive drinking of healths which had continued from the days of the Stuarts. Every villager got gloriously drunk, but was wondrously patriotic with his huzzas, a sworn enemy of any foreigner, particularly of the French. Up at the big mansion some peer of the realm would be entertaining dukes and earls, assize judges and the county gentry; and forty or fifty coaches and chariots would come rumbling along that evening through the sweet-smelling English meadows.

Nothing so united the classes—and then only on rare occasions—as the tidings that arrived (after four weeks) of General Wolfe's defeating Montcalm, and the capture of Quebec, wresting Canada from the French; or of Admiral Hawke's famous victory in Quiberon Bay; or the panic created by the threat of an invasion; or the apoplectic decease of George II. But there were cock-fights, horse-races, cricket played on the village common between rival parishes, the capsizing of some post-chaise and four horses driving too recklessly through the lanes and thus affording a topic for conversation that would last weeks. There would be food for the women-gossipers when the latest bastard birth had taken place, a mild sensation when an old inhabitant died of ague or smallpox, or the local barber was fined half a crown for shaving a man on Sunday, or a spinster under age eloped to Flanders with her lover to get married.

But in London clandestine marriages could be arranged and celebrated in many churches and chapels where no such formalities as bans and license were demanded. And as a rule a maiden had but little choice in husbands. Unless she were of more than average character, and ran away, she could be obliged to marry

some corpulent, dirty, ugly, gouty, snuff addict, sulky of temperament, crimson of countenance, disgusting of habits and coarse of mind. The entire social outlook for men or women was so restricted, so demoralizing, that by the mid-century everything was ripe for a revolution of some sort. That it came from within, that it upset existing standards while developing along sane and constructive lines, is a matter for which to be thankful. It needed just that super ability of a Pitt mind to give it the right guidance, instead of allowing it to work out as the catastrophe occurred in France.

There was beginning, too, not before it was needed, a closer association between parents and children. Hitherto the latter had been almost strangers to the former; but as we see illustrated often in contemporary paintings, the child comes more into the daily life of the father and mother. We see him being made a fuss over, permitted to become an integral feature of the household. His education, if his father was rich, would be in the hands of some cleric, and in some cases he would be sent either to Westminster or Eton. After that, if England were not at war, the eldest son of the family would be sent to travel abroad for two or three years with companions.

He would then come back to London, obtain lodgings in Pall Mall and begin the lazy wasteful life which was the career of many a well-born son. The young man of fashion on a busy day would rise at nine, then for an hour or so attend the levee of some great personage, and next quietly saunter up St. James's Street. Entering some famous coffee-house or chocolate-house, he would sit down and hear the talk of the town from his brother aristocrats. More than likely he had not walked but been carried by sedan chair, which cost him only a guinea a week. In the early eighteenth century there were hun-

dreds of these coffee-houses in London, one authority giving the number as two thousand. The St. James and the Smyrna were the headquarters of the Whig politicians, while the Tories frequented the Cocoa-Tree or Ozinda's. But they were the meeting-places which to-day have been usurped by clubs and restaurants. Coffee-houses have existed in the East for centuries, and still continue. In the late part of the sixteenth century they were established in Constantinople, and thence were introduced into France, so that before the end of the seventeenth century the first coffee-house was opened in London by one who had come from Smyrna.

As they multiplied and became places of popular resort, they were to be turned into nests where all sorts of plots were hatched; from treason in the days of Charles II to political intrigue in Georgian times. White's in St. James's Street, started in 1697 by Francis White and carried on till his death in 1711, was one of the most celebrated of the chocolate-houses. His widow then carried it on, and it was not merely the center of London's fashionable life, but it was here that you bought tickets for all the fashionable amusements, such as for the opera. By this means only those of the élite could obtain the best seats in the Haymarket.

To enter the coffee- or chocolate-house you paid a penny. After about 1730 White's became more and more exclusive for gentlemen of means and leisure. Gradually, in the latter half of the century, the London clubs began taking the place of these coffee-houses, and the present White's Club dates from 1755, but such is the British conservatism that in most London clubs "coffee-room" is still the official designation of what otherwise would be called the dining-room. The younger Pitt was proposed by Fox and elected to Almack's Club and also White's,

but preferred the latter where you could obtain a dinner every evening at twelve shillings and hot supper for eight shillings. Gambling went on even all through the night by the illumination of candles. About 1763 an enterprising Scotsman had opened Almack's in Pall Mall, which became notorious for its high play. The same proprietor also opened "assembly rooms" in King Street, St. James, where fashionable balls were held by subscription. It was in the coffee-houses that the news-sheets could be perused, and generally all the doings of the world were focused and here discussed. The coffee drunk had been brought from Constantinople by English ships which had taken out English cloth to the Levant.

Having thus refreshed himself and become acquainted with contemporary events, the young man-about-town walked westward into the park and dined at two P.M. This would be followed by a game of piquet at one of the coffee-houses, and the evening would be spent if not at the theater then in card-playing. The day might be concluded by attending some assembly at the house of a gentleman of quality. But the trend from east to west of London's residential areas, which to-day is so noticeable a feature, had begun even before Charles II was dead, so that by the mid-eighteenth century people of fashion were living as far west as Leicester Fields (now Leicester Square) and even Grosvenor Square. But villas were also being erected on the banks of the Thames near Hampton Court.

It was for many a dull age, for the young women almost unendurable. There were chop-houses where you could get a plate of broth, a pint of ale quite cheaply, with pies and brawn at Christmas. But the adventurous-minded young men chose a career in the Navy, the Army, or under the East India Company, and saw some-

thing of the outside world. And for these, as England overseas expanded, there was a gradually keener demand. The monotony of listening to the political conversations of gouty choleric tyrants afflicted with sciatica and rheumatism must have been not a little responsible for sending some sons forth to seek careers abroad.

There were others, however, to whom English political life called irresistibly. It has frequently been stated that in our twentieth century the best men with the finest brains do not usually enter Parliament. But two hundred years ago it was otherwise, and William Pitt deliberately chose politics while his elder brother selected a military career. Of what English life was made up, of its need for a great invigorating personality to save it from threatening disasters, we have just formed an impression. It remains now to investigate the ancestral peculiar talent which was being handed down from father to son and polished till it was perfected, ready for the nation's service just at that part of the eighteenth century when a big crisis required a big man.

Chapter II

THE PITT PEOPLE

There are those who inherit a great name, but none of the personal greatness which to that name belongs. There are those—and the further we get down the genealogy, the fewer they seem to be—who by their achievements even increase the reputation of an already illustrious family. In this latter class William Pitt the younger stands out conspicuously. His greatness is not immaculate, but it is well-proportioned and of remarkable unity as to plan. Above all it is full of vigor, energy, sagacity, shrewdness and organizing ability.

We must go into the heart of that picturesque Dorsetshire, with its marvelous coastline, its range of chalk hills, its sunny downs and fertile lands, its dairy-farms, its acres of wheat, barley and oats, its quarries that have yielded the stone and marble for so many of England's Gothic churches. Its ports are few, its tides are strong, portions of its shores are rock-strewn and treacherous. But the sea breezes sweep inland past the old Roman town of Dorchester, with all its romance of antiquity, even to the small municipality of Blandford some sixteen miles to the northeast. Ancient camps and barrows of this neighborhood, and the health-giving atmosphere, made just such a place as would breed men of intellect fitted to hand on their abilities.

In and around Blandford rose the Pitt family, which from the time of the Tudors produced parsons, poets, physicians, country gentlemen. Nicholas Pitt, of Blandford and Wimborne, was alive in the time of Henry VIII. John Pitt, grandson of Nicholas, was clerk of Queen Elizabeth's Exchequer, and died two years before his sovereign's decease. Now from John descended two

sons, William and Thomas. Of the former we need say no more than this: he was given a knighthood in 1618, was comptroller of James I's Household, became Member of Parliament for Wareham (a short distance to the south of Blandford), purchased Strathfieldsaye in Hampshire, and there settled the elder and richer branch of the Pitt family. Our immediate interest is concerned, however, with the progeny of Thomas Pitt. And here let us note the arresting fact that distinction, when inherited, comes frequently not through the first but the second son.

"There have been many illustrious sons of illustrious sires in English history, but they have rarely been the eldest. Queen Elizabeth was served by two great Cecils, and George III by two great Pitts; but the first Earl of Salisbury was not the eldest son of the great Lord Burghley, nor was William Pitt of the Earl of Chatham."* So it was that William Pitt's great-grandfather was a third child, and his great-great-great-grandfather was a younger son, while his great-great-grandfather was likewise.

Now Thomas Pitt, brother of Sir William, inherited property at Blandford and occupied part of his time in municipal politics. He left three sons: William, who became Mayor of Dorchester, Robert and John. The last was afterwards ordained and became Rector of Blandford St. Mary's whose advowson belonged to the Pitt family. The third child of this Rector was Thomas Pitt who was born in 1653, and it is his career which must engage our present attention. One of his relatives was Robert Pitt, M.D., son of another Robert, and also a physician. But the younger doctor, who was born at Blandford in 1653, matriculated at Wadham College,

* *The Evolution of Parliament,* by A. F. Pollard. London, 1926.

Oxford, in April, 1669, was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1682, and lived till 1713. Blandford gave birth also to Christopher Pitt (1699-1748) who obtained some repute as a poet and translator, and this Christopher, in turn, was son of Christopher Pitt, a Blandford physician who died in 1723. The poet, like other members of the family (not excluding the great William Pitt the younger), suffered at an early age from gout. He went up to Winchester and Wadham, and we shall be able to distinguish him as the second cousin of Governor Pitt, and brother of Robert who became a Fellow of Wadham in 1719.

We thus have a family which is entitled to rather more accurate estimation than Macaulay's brief sentence that, "The family of Pitt was wealthy and respectable." The wealth was presently to come through Thomas, son of the Rector. But already the Pitts had been well regarded by two English sovereigns, and long before the birth of the younger Pitt had been honored by the most intellectual society in the land. This virile race of country gentlemen, with their family well-rooted in Dorsetshire soil, but their minds interested in learning and politics, was just ripe and ready for some big occasion. It needed only some adequate opportunity for displaying its full strength of character in opposition to persons and circumstances. And as has happened so frequently in English history, it was a son of the Rectory who went abroad, amassed wealth, showed that he was the sort of man on whom a big company could rely for integrity.

This Thomas Pitt waited till his clerical father died, and then in 1674, having now come of age in July, felt the call of adventure summoning him to the Orient. We find him this year sailing for India in a ship named the *Lancaster*. The date is interesting, for the long-drawn-

out Anglo-Dutch Wars had at last come to an end, both sides were anxious for peace, and on February ninth of that year the Peace of London was signed. England's supremacy at sea was acknowledged in no ambiguous terms, and her maritime future was clearly indicated to any one with eyes to see. She had learned the importance of a Navy, she had been through the terror of invasion; but all this seafaring and fighting had created a marine instinct in many a home where previously it had not existed. For the Dutch Wars had taught the senior officers the art of manœuvering and fighting, not as individual ship-units, but as squadrons; how to keep the enemy to leeward, how to divide his fleet if he were to windward, how to maintain line-ahead formation and avoid firing on one's own ships. But all these battles and weeks spent afloat, the necessity of winning victory, the embarkation of so many men, the personal enthusiasm for ships and nautical matters expressed by both Charles II and James II, called the country's attention to a matter that had not in general been considered previously with sufficient enthusiasm.

Financially, England had been strained by these wars quite as much as she had suffered nervously. But ambitious youth now perceived two things. English ships could go where they liked without fear of any one. Many people were crossing the Atlantic and settling in either Virginia or New England, and New York was once again taken out of Dutch control. The first-mentioned was now a big colony, soon to number about forty thousand white people with its convict and indentured labor. But many fortunes had been lost in America, and there was more money to be made more quickly in the East than in the West. Moreover, the Dutch had been the one remaining danger that menaced English merchants trading to

India. That difficulty being passed, one's father recently dead, and one's own right to manhood now conceded, what was more natural than that Thomas Pitt should take his money and go out to the Orient at the first opportunity?

It was a momentous decision, for it was to have great influence on the family's future history. The magnetic East had attracted Europeans for centuries, and several Elizabethan Englishmen had reached India by the overland route from the Mediterranean. After all fear from Spanish ships had been removed by the Armada defeat, English merchants were considering the project of sending a small squadron to open up a direct sea trade with India. To this end they petitioned Queen Elizabeth for a royal license. After procrastinating for some time, she finally granted the permission, so that in April, 1591, three ships under the very gallant Captain Lancaster sailed from Plymouth. One of these vessels, with Lancaster himself, crossed the Indian Ocean and reached the Malacca Straits. His voyage ended disastrously, yet he brought home such valuable information concerning the way thither, that the merchants of London became enthusiastic.

Lancaster had got back in 1594. But the following year saw the Dutch sending a squadron of four ships under Cornelis Houtman to countries beyond the Indian Ocean. In 1597 Houtman returned, bringing a treaty which had been effected with the King of Bantam for future trade. It was thus that Holland opened up her historic connection with the East Indies, by which she was to amass wealth and become a great sea power. One of the finest marine paintings in the world is that by H. C. Vroom which shows Houtman's vessels arriving back in Dutch waters.

Commercial jealousy of the Dutch, and the need of England for increased trade, caused a number of English knights and merchants to form the first English East India Company, which received its charter shortly before the Queen died. Four ships sailed from England in 1601 under Lancaster, who reached Achin at the northwest end of Sumatra and obtained a trading concession from its native ruler. He also opened up commerce with Bantam, established a factory and came home with valuable cargoes of pepper to the extent of one million and thirty thousand pounds. It was thus that in 1603 the first English East India Company's voyage had been most profitably concluded. Further expeditions followed naturally, a factory was established at Surat (just north of Bombay), bigger ships were built specially for this trade, the company waxed very prosperous, with its yard at Deptford, and by 1621 was employing twenty-five hundred seamen, and about one hundred and twenty factors located in India. By this date the company had taken out three hundred and nineteen thousand, two hundred and eleven pounds' worth of English woolen goods, lead, iron, tin and other commodities, which were sold to the Orientals. Eastern cargoes had been bought for three hundred and seventy-five thousand, two hundred and eighty-eight pounds, which were presently sold in England for the magnificent sum of two million forty-four thousand, six hundred pounds. Thus, in spite of running expenses and big risks, the profits to be obtained from Indian merchandise were staggering. The first twelve voyages gave an average profit of one hundred thirty-eight per cent.

Now this English East India Company was rivaled only by the Dutch East India Company, and was a unique organization even by the late seventeenth century. Dept-

ford was a busy hive with its shipbuilding, workmen, "clarke of the yard," master shipwright, master pilot, treasurers, "purcer-generall," "clarke of the cordage," "chirurgion generall," coopers, boat-builders, clerk of the slaughter-house, clerk of the "imprest" (*i.e.* he who paid the wages allowed to wives while their husbands were at sea, and to the men when they got home after the voyage). A large magazine containing thirty thousand pounds' worth of warlike stores was always ready, and they manufactured their own gunpowder, using saltpeter brought home in their own ships from the East.

This Company was to grow up into the most valuable and exclusive monopoly which has ever existed in the history of trade. Most carefully and jealously did this English corporation guard itself from interlopers, and went on amassing wealth for its stockholders who, in turn, were laying the very foundations in the city of London for England's future prosperity which would spread in all directions. It became known, even as early as the late seventeenth century, by the name "Honorable" Company, and was so full of funds that in 1649 the Commissioners of the Navy borrowed a few thousand pounds. Cromwell five years later made a treaty with the Portuguese which allowed English ships to trade with any of Portugal's East Indian possessions. This was a windfall for the Company, and Cromwell realized it: he therefore borrowed sixty thousand pounds from its coffers.

Now in the year 1640 permission had been obtained from the native authorities to build the first of the Company's forts in India. This became known as Fort St. George, which was to become Madras, the settlement being raised to a presidency in 1658. The first importation of tea by the Company was brought to England in 1667, and it was not long before this new form of drink was

very popular. Thus, here was a vast concern owning about thirty ships which varied from one hundred to about seven hundred tons, paying sixty thousand pounds a year in customs on silks, pepper and other Indian produce, and generally doing so well that by 1683 a one-hundred-pound share in the Company was eagerly bought for five-hundred pounds. Of course there were plenty of merchants who were very vigorous in opposing the continuance of this magnificent monopoly; and there were some who tried to snatch part of the trade for themselves by using the country contrary to the Company's permission. But Elizabethans had interloped in West Indian waters notwithstanding Spain and the Pope; so here we find at least one English adventurer doing a similar thing in India but in defiance of an English corporation.

When Thomas Pitt sailed from England in that well-named *Lancaster* and reached Balasor (one hundred and eighteen miles southwest of Calcutta), one of the earliest Anglo-Indian settlements, and dating from 1642, the young man knew perfectly well that he had no right to begin trading in Bengal. But he was an ambitious business-getter, keen, astute, far-sighted, a hard bargainer, difficult to thwart, clever and resourceful. A short-statured fellow, sturdy and thick-set, he was one of those who have a natural capacity for getting round awkward laws and regulations and defying opposition. Absolutely fearless, hard-working, full of vitality, able to use other men for his own purpose, he was just the right kind of adventurer who could take the risk of embarking on unauthorized commerce.

He made useful friends at Balasor, including the East India Company's chief agent in Bengal, whose niece—a Miss Jane Innes—Pitt married. Within four years he had obtained an interest in several ships, by which he

was carrying on trade with the Malay Archipelago and Persia. In India he had well established himself as a private venturer, and evaded the attentions of the East India Company, who were extremely annoyed and regarded Pitt as "a desperate fellow." When matters were getting too hot for him, he sailed away to England during the year 1681 in a ship called the *William and John*. Finally he was arrested for his interloping, but managed to get off at the expense of a four-hundred-pound fine. So little regard had he for all the Company's might and menaces, that in the following year he had formed a little interloping company, got together a small squadron in the Thames and sailed away before the English authorities could stop him. When once at sea he was safe, and in July, 1682, he landed at Balasor after about six months' voyaging.

Thomas Pitt loved pomp and ceremony, coveted great possessions, worshiped money. At Balasor he came ashore in state, remained seven months and then sailed back to England, where he arrived in June, 1683, worth at least forty thousand pounds. His fiery energy, his terrible thirst for power, his violent passion for politics now caused him to buy his way into Parliament. With such a fortune in those days could be purchased goodly estates and small constituencies. The scandal of the rotten boroughs was not swept away until another century and a half, before which time two hundred members of Parliament were being returned by places with less than one hundred electors, and three hundred and fifty-seven members were nominated by one hundred and fifty-four patrons.

By means of this quickly acquired wealth, Pitt was able to settle down in his home country, purchased land in Dorset, became in 1689 M. P. for New Sarum, or

Salisbury, in 1690 bought from Lord Salisbury the manor which carried with it the borough of Old Sarum, drove about in his coach and was altogether a person of importance. But such were those curious times that a lawmaker did not hesitate to break the law if his own personal interests clashed. This supporter of the Whigs would do anything, engage on any enterprise, if only it suggested big money. Thus we find him not merely quite lawfully, in association with eight other London merchants, fitting out the *Arcana* galley to go privateering; not merely helping to found a company which did an interloping trade in Northwest America, although the Hudson's Bay Company were already in possession; but in 1693 he temporarily forsook Parliament, took two ships, *Edward* and *Seymour,* as well as sixty thousand pounds, and once more sailed off to India for trade, reaching Balasor on October first.

The time was interesting. Buccaneering was being practised in the West Indies and encouraging the English sea spirit still further. But in 1689 war had been declared between England and France, an Anglo-Dutch fleet had been defeated off Beachey Head, a wave of indignation had swept over England, and in 1692 Louis with James was collecting a fleet at Brest for the invasion of England. But off Cape La Hogue in May an Anglo-Dutch fleet met the French and defeated the latter in the greatest naval victory won by the English between the times of the Armada and Trafalgar.

Not less intriguing was this particular period in respect of politics and finance. In the year that Pitt sailed with his two ships, William III began weeding out all Tories from the Government and forming a united Whig Ministry. During this same 1693 was originated the National Debt, so that money was no longer lent to the

monarch but to the nation; and in the next year was established the Bank of England which was able to lend the Government one million two hundred thousand pounds at eight per cent., which was not a high rate in those times. It was just the suitable stage of advance for this development. There were now enough capitalists in the country who had the money to lend the bank, and they felt that in the bank's hands it would be safe. Conversely, the bank lent it to trustworthy enterprising men, who were taking advantage of the great overseas trade now fast being created and expanded. Thus both parties were being benefited, and the preparations being made for that great revival and industrial revolution which were to come over England less than a century later.

The Hogue victory was not a definite one in regard to settling the primacy of France; and indeed, apart from further wars to come, French privateers were still causing a serious hindrance to English trading ships. But from now the gradual, though certain, decline of the French Navy began. English merchantmen, well armed, were able to take risks and by every voyage round Cape of Good Hope to India were slowly making a permanent trade route that some day would be also a road to Empire. All the time in the opposite direction an exodus was going forth in Atlantic ships to settle trade with American colonies; but the English Government was particularly inclined to favor the Honorable East India Company, because it was from the first a valuable source of money when costly crises, such as wars, caused anxious moments. Virginia, on the other hand, though now self-supporting and able to export considerable quantities of tobacco, had nothing like the Oriental wealth.

Thus we find the East India Company receiving a fresh charter in 1693, though between 1694 and 1698

this Eastern trade was thrown practically open. The Government required the loan of two million pounds and this was provided by a newly formed company of associated merchants who had been vigorously opposing the East India Company's exclusive privilege. Inasmuch as the new association asked only eight per cent. interest, a charter was granted, and it became known as The New East India Company. There were accordingly now two rival and mutually jealous corporations, each of which was very unpopular with the general public: but in 1708 the two rivals amalgamated into The United Company of Merchants of England Trading to the East Indies. The capital was increased to three million two hundred thousand pounds, they were able to lend the Government one million two hundred thousand pounds without interest, and the Government in turn extended the Company's charter till 1726 and even to 1766.

In 1695 Thomas Pitt returned to England to find the 1690 Parliament dissolved, but a House of Commons much more Whiggish than hitherto. Into that Parliament he was elected during October as M. P. for Old Sarum. We can thus perceive how distinctly and persistently was being developed the family inclination for politics which comes out so significantly in Chatham and William Pitt. But Thomas was no longer regarded by the East India Company as a mischievous or desperate fellow. By a change in circumstances the outlook was entirely altered. Pitt had shown himself too clever a person for any corporation with its unwieldy organization; he was too financially and socially strong to be browbeaten. But the Company had fallen on hard times; it had begun to suffer from that deadening influence of uncompetitive monopoly. There was a great deal of mismanagement and corruption from within, some of the

directors feathering their own nests flagrantly. As for India, the interloping had become too serious for it to be winked at any longer.

Now the Company well knew the sterling independence of Pitt, his fearlessness and his determination: just as in Stuart times the State sometimes appointed retired English pirates to the duty of stamping out piracy, so Pitt in November, 1697, was appointed President of Fort St. George, with special instructions to prevent interloping. His eldest son Robert (destined to become father of Chatham and grandfather of William Pitt) was permitted to reside at Fort George and carry on there as a free merchant; that is to say "on his own," without indebtedness to the Company.

By sheer force of character and a certain amount of initial capital, Thomas Pitt had now risen to a rank which included that of commander-in-chief at Fort St. George and Fort St. David's. With true family characteristic, he kept up considerable pomp, and for twelve years the Company had reason not to regret their choice. For he caused Madras to be in a flourishing condition by his bold and shrewd resourcefulness. Cool in emergency, faithful to his trust, resolute and decisive in his dealing with difficulties, always alive to commercial possibilities, forceful of nature, brooking no opposition, he was known out there as "the Great President." His chiefest personal defect was his abnormal love of money, and some years before his presidential time was completed he availed himself of a unique opportunity such as occurs not once in generations. It is curious how chance plays its pranks on posterity, but here was a most romantic event which was to make the family fortune something far greater than a competence just adequate for a politician's needs. The following series of episodes

has all the elements of a modern adventure novel, and again indicates that unadorned history is capable of providing some of the most amazing aspects of truth.

A certain Indian slave discovered a diamond in the Parteal mine on the Kistna in Madras, and managed to hide it in a wound of his leg. From him it was stolen by an English master mariner, who sold it to a native merchant named Jamchund. The latter brought it to Thomas Pitt in December of 1701 and offered to sell it for the equivalent of eighty thousand pounds. Pitt, with his usual commercial acumen, determined to buy it, and bargained till the diamond changed ownership at twenty thousand four hundred pounds. Next year he sent it home by his son Robert. It was a very large stone and very rough, weighing four hundred ten carats. It was now cut in London to one hundred thirty-six and three-fourths carats, the cleavage and dust being valued at about seven thousand pounds. It was some years before Pitt could dispose of it, and he even had a portrait of himself painted by Kneller showing the diamond in his hat. But in 1717 the slave's precious possession was finally sold to the regent of France—Louis XV being then a small delicate boy—for the vast sum of one hundred thirty-five thousand pounds, and to this day it is preserved among the French jewels.

When Pitt, having finally ended his Indian career, again settled down in England, he began purchasing more estates. One of these was Boconnoc Manor, with its wooded park, which lies about four miles eastward of Lostwithiel in the heart of Cornwall, and is one of the finest properties in the county. Boconnoc, which in the reign of William I belonged to Robert de Mortain, then to the Carminows and the Courtenays, at last came into the hands of the Mohuns. But the fifth Lord Mohun had

a somewhat hectic and quarrelsome career. At the age of seventeen he was tried for having murdered a man in a drunken brawl, yet was acquitted. At twenty-three he was tried for the murder of Captain Coote, and once more acquitted. But when Mohun was thirty-seven he challenged the Duke of Hamilton to a duel, and both were wounded mortally. That was in 1712, so in the following year the estate passed into Thomas Pitt's possession for fifty-three thousand pounds. The present church dates from the fifteenth century, and near by is Braddock Down where in 1643 there was a battle between the Parliamentary and Royalist forces. But Boconnoc itself will ever retain a special interest as having been the home of the future Chatham during his boyhood.

We can visualize Thomas Pitt, bad-tempered, gouty, with an Indian liver, returning home in one of the Company's ships. He was accommodated in the great cabin of this fine stalwart vessel. It was the best portion reserved for presidents and generals, though normally occupied by the commander who could make two or three hundreds pounds by giving up his cabin for the voyage. The passenger brought his own bedding and furniture on board, but he was allowed three or four tons of baggage. Such a ship was run on lines almost identical with the naval standard, and her crew were accustomed to fighting pirates, privateers and men-of-war. She would, after sailing up the English Channel, anchor in the Downs where one of the Company's pilots would come off and take her up the Thames to Deptford. Not infrequently the distinguished passenger in the great cabin, which was situated in the steerage, would go ashore and be landed at Deal as soon as the ship anchored in the Downs; and the rest of the journey up to London he would per-

form by coach, only too thankful to have finished with the sea.

Resuming politics, this wealthy and confirmed Whig reentered Parliament as Member for Old Sarum in November, 1710. Four years later, on the accession of George I, he was received by that sovereign in audience, and Thomas Pitt was given the further appointment as governor of Jamaica, which however he never took up. That he had established himself as one of England's outstanding men is already clear. With a London house in Pall Mall, country estates consisting of Boconnoc, several Dorset manors, and Swallowfield Place near Reading, Governor Pitt was able to found a family who maintained a strong tradition. The Miss Innes whom he had married about 1679, was a descendant from the Earls of Moray and therefore from the natural son of James V. And without seeking to place too heavy a responsibility on influences capable of being transmitted, it is permissible to see here a further intensifying of the ruling capability that would be well manifested in her grandson and great-grandson. As great rivers are the products of auxiliary tributaries, each bearing along its own deposits; so in the making of the younger William Pitt many streams contributed with all sorts of characteristics. But for the most part we notice the reddish-brown rust which suggests iron, yet in no wise detracts from the water's soundness.

Governor Pitt's eldest son, Robert, married a granddaughter of Viscount Grandison. Thomas, the second son, married the Earl of Londonderry's heiress; another son, John, married Lord Fauconberg's daughter; and Lucy wedded General James, who afterwards became Earl Stanhope. Thomas was created Baron of Londonderry and afterwards Earl. For a time he represented

Wilton as M. P., and in 1727 was returned to the House of Commons for Old Sarum, but received the appointment of governor of the Leeward Islands. Thus the rich old interloper was able to obtain for himself and his children such material advantages as wealth and position may bring. He died in 1726 and was buried at Blandford, not as the peaceable septuagenarian contented and thankful for a successful life, but worry-ridden and soured, tyrannical and embittered, a martyr to his avarice and his gout, a terror to his children and grandchildren who suffered from his explosive temper.

He had gained for himself everything that a thoroughly materialistic age could hold out. But there were some things which his money could not buy—marital happiness and tranquillity of mind. If his wife became unfaithful and caused a separation, we can well believe that the Governor was not the easiest of husbands with whom to live. If he regarded his eldest son, Robert, as a fool, then the latter was at any rate to be father of the "Great Commoner," Chatham the eloquent, who revived England's glory and made it the leading country in the world. But the brilliant owner of Boconnoc was not always infallible regarding matters of finance. His greed had made him suspicious, though it did not prevent him from making big losses when the South Sea bubble burst; so that when he passed away there was left to his heirs nothing like the fortune which had been once accumulated.

One is indeed reminded of that inscription belonging to the year 1584 placed in one of London's city churches:—

> What I gave, that I have,
> What I spent, that I had;
> Thus I count all my cost,
> What I left, that I lost.

Now Robert had two sons, Thomas and William. The former inherited the estates and parliamentary interests of the family. The latter was born in November, 1708. Thomas had a son who was born in 1737 at Boconnoc, went up to Clare College, Cambridge, and suffered from ill health as a young man. He availed himself of the family interest and became Member of Parliament for Old Sarum in 1761. Twenty-three years later he was to be made Baron Camelford of Boconnoc, owing to the influence of his cousin, the younger William Pitt. Some have identified Camelford with Camelot, where King Arthur was mortally wounded when he fought against Mordred. But at any rate it was hereabouts that Britons fought Saxons in the year 823. Lord Camelford, however, need not detain us. He lived for a time at Twickenham, had the high intellectual qualities of the Pitt family, their distinguished bearing, no less than their gout, and died in 1793.

We are now at liberty to confine our attention to William Pitt, who was to become the first Earl of Chatham; and to his son William, whose career we shall study in detail. But it was first essential to ascertain clearly what was the peculiar hereditary temperament, handed down through previous generations, which enabled these two immense personalities to become what they were, and to impose themselves on the destiny of the world's progress. As if they had been specially set apart, through Tudor and Stuart times, till Hanoverian England required their perfected talents, the Pitts had continued to develop a stabilized set of characteristics, which survived the entire eighteenth century. Let us summarize these qualities, for thus in comprehending the mental and moral pedigree we can the more readily understand the problems of practical politics as they were presented

to the Pitt mind during a period of unprecedented gravity. If we are familiar with a man's distinctive attributes, his strength, his weakness, his peculiarities, idiosyncrasies, virtues and failings, we can take a far more sympathetic concern in all his individual actions. We get, so to speak, at the back of his mind and into his skin, beholding events through his eyes.

Both the "Great Commoner" and the "Great Pilot" had inherited from the "Great President" an immense ambition and tremendous mental energy, together with a natural and exceptional capacity for ruling. With this went also a haughtiness that brooked no interference from others, a self-consciousness of intellectual superiority and a self-reliant independence. This pride, whether expressed in theatrical gesture, in the love of pompous display, in the mere manner of walking and sitting, but especially in their relationships to their fellow men, stirred up deep bitterness and wounded many to become enemies. Nevertheless, in the end, such was the solidity of the Pitt character that it won and retained both official and public confidence whenever the emergency was at its worst. By sheer strength and sincerity, by never stooping to mean tricks, by no petty envy but by inspiring reliance, a Pitt could persuade Parliament and populace to accept him at his own valuation.

The iron will, the clear aim, the sturdy Whig faith, the genuine devotion to the pursuit of politics; the absolute fearlessness in facing facts and consequences, the refusal to be unnerved, the cool commanding intrepidity, the incorruptibility of purpose; the oratorical ability, and the power of mesmerizing opponents by personal magnetism or of inspiring fear; the physical disability of gout which could not kill an ardent adventurous spirit; these were the fundamental Pitt talents and traits which were to be

exhibited so significantly in father and son alike. However notable were the differences in other respects, however much the special influences of time and circumstance were responsible for modifications in temperament and outlook, there was this consolidation, this synthesis in common.

The stage was now set, the great European drama was about to begin, the persons of the play had only to enact their own characters before an audience consisting of the whole civilized world. The time is that eighteenth century with its violent animosities, its wars and rumors of wars, its penetrating shipping; its Kit-Cat Club, landscape gardens, thatched temples, quiet glades, expanding Empire, rising trade, and growing need of internal reform.

Chapter III

THE PITT PERSONALITY

William Pitt, who was born in Westminster on November 15, 1708, son of Robert Pitt the Cornish squire of Boconnoc and of Harriet, younger daughter of the Honorable Edward Villiers, was educated at Eton and Trinity College, Oxford. In accordance with the family tradition, he was even from boyhood a martyr to gout, so he left Oxford without taking a degree and traveled on the continent, but without being able to improve the malady which was to continue through his life and be inherited by his son William.

When the elder Pitt was brought as an infant to be baptized in the church of St. James, Piccadilly, that great inspirer of English marine painting—William van de Velde the Elder—had been buried in this very church just fifteen years, the union of Scotland with England had been completed only a few months, Queen Anne had another six years to live, Rooke had added the strategically invaluable Gibraltar to the growing English Empire, Marlborough by his brilliant Blenheim campaign had shown himself to the world not merely as a consummate tactician but the means of preventing an invasion of England. The elder Pitt is indeed that link which connects the Stuart days of undeveloped England with the England of ambitious Georgian achievement and military glory.

During the elder Pitt's infancy the country's international relationship had become clarified when the irritating War of the Spanish Succession was ended by the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713. At sea this was not a period of naval tactical progress but (to quote Admiral Mahan) an "epoch of mere seamanship." Still, the fact that

England was permitted to retain Gibraltar and Minorca in Europe, and Hudson's Bay, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland in the Western Hemisphere, was a striking proof that the once poverty-stricken, sea-shy nation had at last become a great maritime power.

If we regard the sequence of events from a personal point of view, we can thus see how a new scene was being designed in readiness for the two Pitts to demonstrate their considerable talents. For the Utrecht Treaty had, in the words of a modern historian* "ushered in the stable and characteristic period of Eighteenth Century civilization, marked the end of danger to Europe from the old French monarchy, and it marked a change of no less significance to the world at large—the maritime, commercial and financial supremacy of Great Britain." The latter was to have the world for her market, to send her trading vessels as far west as North America, as far east as China. And while the elder Pitt was passing through youth to full manhood, his country was (notwithstanding the temporary South Sea Company's baneful influence and the rage for foolish speculation) becoming financially sound, internally harmonious, with Parliament supreme in the constitution.

It was thus into a period of comparatively peaceful domesticity that the elder Pitt was to be presented, while the lucky shareholders of the East India Company continued to make fortunes through tea, spices, shawls, cotton goods, saltpeter; erect for themselves comfortable red-brick houses, lay down cellars of wine, and trust to the political no less than the religious liberties of Englishmen being preserved by uninterrupted power exercised by the Whigs. It is, however, to be noted that

* *History of England,* by George Macaulay Trevelyan, London, 1928, p. 486.

Pitt was to project his influence through a parliamentary system which was anything but representative and became still more corrupt as the art of politics increased its strength. By a curious illogical blindness the series of reforms, when they did at last come, began at the wrong end. It was just because Parliament had not first reformed itself, but remained not truly expressive of the national will, that the quarrel with the American colonies ended so fatally to the mother country.

The twentieth century is an age of moderately high-standard men spread over a wide and enveloping area. The eighteenth century was a period of low general average, but with a few outstanding men of war, learning, art, discovery, invention, who were full of a vigorous individualism. One need cite only such names as Hawke, Rodney, Wolfe, St. Vincent, Bishop Butler, Captain Cook, Reynolds, James Watt as instances. Had it not been an era when stagnation had set in; when in the Navy, during years of peace, there was to be engendered in the minds of officers an unenlightened slavish adherence to formality rather than to the spirit of the fighting instructions (so that it was considered better to fight and lose a battle according to the recognized uninspired system than to win by originality of thought); when, in the guidance of public affairs, there was a self-satisfied slothfulness already doing its grievous harm—then there would have been no especial distinction in the careers of Cook, Rodney or Pitt. But, for as much as such men in their respective spheres brought exceptional imagination, vigor and sudden energy, quickening the national life and startling the somnolent, these and their very few compeers stood out conspicuously from the crowd.

To this extent, then, the two Pitts were fortunate in having both been born in due time. They were not less

fortunate in the family tradition of political-mindedness which they brought to their great responsibilities. Thus were happily mated, in the life of each, a series of great occasions demanding a super mind. The elder Pitt lost nothing by the fact of a new dynasty beginning when the future Great Commoner was only six years old. Both of the first two Georges were ignorant of English customs and usages, so that there was little to prevent the direction of affairs falling naturally into the hands of Ministers. And while there was thus evolved government by Cabinet backed by Parliament, kingly domination receding meanwhile, an opportunity of an unusual kind was afforded for Ministers possessing constructive oratory. Outstanding personality expressed by clever rhetoric, able to excite and incite the emotions of fellow parliamentarians, was a dangerous gift in the days of James I or Charles I. The Tower of London and the scaffold might be the only reward for the abilities of strong-minded zealots. But with the establishment of liberty and the growth of parliamentary power it was worth while for a Pitt to devote his whole attention to perfect self-expression.

To become a skilful speaker, technically perfect, excellent in clear delivery, able to be heard by every listener, was an aim which men like the Pitts, or Burke, or Fox set before themselves with every determination which accompanies persistent practise. The elevated thought conveyed with dignity of form, carefully chosen words, well-balanced sentences and a keen sense of rhythm; the persuasive voice, the dramatic appeal, the violent castigation and theatrical hauteur,—these were the direct methods which moved the men who, in turn, set moving national reforms or committed the country to war. Thus in a period which still retained an unquestioning fidelity to classical models in art, architecture and literature, every

political postulant must study the speeches of Demosthenes or Cicero, in the same manner as contemporary eighteenth-century decorators copied the cherubs, the nymphs and goddesses, the muses and Mars, Neptune and scrollwork, urns and other symbols of bygone centuries.

The new strength, the wonderful freedom, which the House of Commons had obtained were during Sir Robert Walpole's time being gradually appreciated. Ministers ceased to be servants of the sovereign in everything except in name. They realized that the source of their backing was not the approval of the Crown, but the confidence of the Commons. Therefore, every oratorical trick, every possible means of swaying those within ear-shot, must be worked to its fullest limit.

But oratory to-day plays in the Government of England a part quite inferior to that in the Pitt days: and the reason is twofold. First, the actual cubic measurement of the space for assembly was smaller and more intimate, as the difference is noticeable between our little theaters and the vast buildings for spectacular displays. It was easier to address those who were of a more homogeneous class of representatives, than it is to fascinate by words three disunited and differently shaded groups of partizans to-day. Even still more important is it to observe that, two hundred years ago, speakers in Parliament were talking merely among themselves. They neither spoke to the nation nor adequately represented the nation's voice.

To-day, however, a Minister's speech is carried by the press to every remote district. He chooses his words rather than his manner; he emphasizes his facts and logic, rather than his method of delivery, style or tone. He has enlarged his audience from hundreds to millions. And from the time that this universal publicity was given

to parliamentary reports, the old standard of eloquence gradually declined till after Gladstone it practically disappeared. Would the two Pitts to-day command the same following as in their epoch? Given the same national crises and the same parliamentary opportunities, would the future Chatham have wielded the same influence? The answer may not be agreed on universally. But quite apart from the fact that their personalities gained some portion of their value by reason of the sharp contrast with that of the average eighteenth-century man, there is the element of immediacy. It was the impression made by a Minister on those actually surrounding him which mattered.

"His fame out-of-doors," says Macaulay in one of his essays on Chatham, "depended entirely on the report of those who were within the doors. In the Parliaments of that time, therefore, as in the ancient commonwealths, those qualifications which enhance the immediate effect of a speech were far more important ingredients in the composition of an orator than at present. All those qualifications Pitt possessed in the highest degree. On the stage, he would have been the finest Brutus or Coriolanus ever seen."

No father can teach who has yet to learn. The future Chatham, who took such pains to instruct the boy William Pitt how to will others by the flow of words, had himself learned how to play upon the minds and feelings of that composite character made up of parliamentary members. It was an aristocratic assembly addressed by aristocrats who understood the mental attitude customary among gentlemen. What did it matter if most of them had been returned by the private patronage of the few? Or that Old Sarum, which the elder Pitt was to represent on his first entrance to Parliament in 1735,

consisted of little more than "a mound and a few ruins"? The middle classes, still less the lower, were not admitted for another century.

Thus, at age twenty-seven, the future Lord Chatham had well fitted himself for the career which now lay open for his talents. If his father had died, and little of the Indian fortune from Governor Pitt had descended to the grandson, at least there were the essentials which make up an eighteenth-century statesman's outfit. When William Pitt the elder made his maiden speech, still more as he became practised, there were five separate items by which he appealed to his audience, five distinct points which he had so assiduously polished, that not even Garrick (had he been old enough) and Doctor Johnson (had he been an actor) could by their joint efforts of style and diction have been able to teach the future Great Commoner the grammar of his art.

First: he had the facile mind, the ready tongue, the inflammable enthusiasm of one who believes sincerely in his own cause. Second: he had the voice so excellently trained as to be capable of rendering every tone and inflection with perfect audibility in every portion of the House. Third: he was a born actor, knowing how to register with eyes and facial expression the biting scorn, the superior indignation which his words were suggesting. That there were times when he overstressed this histrionic display and declaimed in the stilted unnatural manner of the time is not surprising. Naturalism was scarcely appreciated in an age when artists loved to paint all grass brown. Fourth: he looked the part which he had selected for himself to play. His fine Roman nose, his high forehead, his noble and distinguished manner, his commanding presence, his graceful figure, all combined to impress any listener who was not blind. And finally,

THE EARL OF CHATHAM

Father of William Pitt, from the portrait in the National Gallery, London, attributed to R. Brompton.

at the back of all this there was that communicable but indefinable personal magnetism which reaches a speaker's audience but not always his readers.

In the case of both Pitts we find a complete surrender from early manhood to the service of the State. There is nothing half-hearted or only partly sustained. Each before long finds his country sorely distressed; each guides her with genius and rectitude but dies in doing so. Willingly they spent their careers in parliamentary conflict, not to their financial gain but because they felt conscious of their vocations. If they connived at the purchase of rotten boroughs, every one knew that a Pitt could not be bought. Aloofness was not merely a social mannerism, but an attitude definitely indicated with regard to money matters. At a time when the standards of political ethics were low, the Pitts won for themselves a unique confidence because of their incorruptibility. People will tolerate even excessive pride when that over-developed respect for self is accompanied by loftiness of character. What they will not accept is a man who can not aim high.

It was not in the Pitts, either father or son, to be petty or to win cheap popularity. The senior Pitt, for example, did not hesitate—as on the occasion when he had the courage to speak up on behalf of Byng—to risk the esteem of Parliament and even King, if the case demanded it. So, if there be some virtue in every defect, we can be thankful that in the father Pitt there was too much pride to allow himself to stoop to what was ignoble. There is a point where a man may say to himself and even to his friends: "Here is a great duty for which no one is better fitted than myself, and I propose to shoulder that office." He is entitled to claim that duty as his, without accusation of being conceited, only if he be both sincere and capable.

One of the highest forms of courage is that which accepts high responsibility with readiness and without flinching. The engineer who is willing to risk his wealth and reputation by building a mammoth bridge, boring a tunnel below a mighty river, or cutting a canal through mountainous terrain, is risking everything against the powers of nature to beat him. But the pioneer accepts that risk, because without being a gambler he delights in overcoming obstacles and reaping the reward. The Pitt family were fitted for governing and incurring responsibility. They went out of their way to seek and obtain governance, not from base motives of self-advancement but because they were conscious of a particular genius. One of them perceived this in regard to the East India Company's trade within Madras. Two of them saw it concerning the difficulties which threatened England. All three justified the confidence they had called forth. Such unquestioned success would have been impossible if arrogance had not been based on exceptional gifts and disinterested fidelity to duty.

The elder Pitt beheld his beloved nation sinking under the weight of its own increasing decadence; suffering insults through insufficiency of self-respect. He therefore set out boldly to remove ponderable trouble, to inspire a healthy assurance and teach it to cultivate its inherent strength. It was an up-hill task, needing immense energy and pluck, yet his reward was not merely the visible and material successes which accrue in victories and territories but the universal regard which a grateful nation bestowed on him. When friends and foes, colonies and foreign enemies, all pointed their fingers in one direction, it was toward the senior Pitt who had created a new spirit, inaugurated a fresh trend in big affairs. When Wolfe achieved the heights of Abraham; when Hawke came

swooping from the Bay of Biscay, chasing the French fleet among the treacherous rocks and pinnacles of Quiberon Bay, and undertaking every risk to ships, caring nothing for the formality of stereotyped tactics, but aiming solely on so defeating the enemy as to prevent their invasion of England; or when Spain was glad to sign the Peace of Paris in 1763, it was Pitt who had inspired the change in outlook.

And his influence lasted. Even four years after his death it was the Pitt mind in Rodney that caused the latter at the Battle of the Saints to take a big risk on a great occasion; to save his country by breaking with a fallacious service tradition in the hour of battle. As the then First Lord of the Admiralty remarked, "the King's whole dominions" were at this poignant period under the care of Rodney who, forsaking the stilted tactics of ship-to-ship dueling, exhibited a bold initiative, sighted an opening in the enemy's line, swung into it and cut off part of the French fleet from the rest. It was this victory which once more restored Britain to her position as mistress of the ocean.

We shall not err from truth, then, if we think of the elder Pitt as employing all his eloquence, his pride, his intrepidity, his ardor, his dominating presence, his constructive energy, for a national renaissance. He was before anything else a reformer whose activities were many-sided. Not merely was he expanding and consolidating an empire, but he was anxious for England to be rid of those tiresome and embarrassing connections which continued as a result of enjoying a Hanoverian succession of kings, and drained English money to subsidize Prussian princes. In the enterprising, adventurous, defiant and even impetuous personality of the elder Pitt, which set England on her feet, brought prosperity

to her merchants and importance to what are now leading cities of commerce and industry, we clearly see the family likeness to Governor Pitt.

What the ex-interloper had done on a limited scale, the Great Commoner had effected on national and extra-territorial lines. By sheer personality he had become far more notable than a twentieth-century Mussolini. Not merely had he tamed Parliament and put every one at home in his place, but he had placed his nation in the foremost position among other nations. He was at once an idol and a terror, but at all times a distinctive ruler.

It is indeed fascinating to watch how all the various influences at work became guided toward one end. When George I had reached England that September day in 1714, he was to receive the support of the Church of England, the squires and all lovers of order who were resolved that under no circumstances would they tolerate Roman Catholic rule. They were still less than two centuries away from the Reformation and had not yet recovered from the shock. Animosities were still very sharp, and that attitude of suspicion coupled with distrust which was so marked during the first half of the seventeenth century had in no way been improved by the conduct of James II. Englishmen felt that he had let them down badly and deceived them woefully. Never again should one of his faith sit on the throne of England.

This first George made no attempt to form a mixed Ministry, but placed himself in the hands of the Whigs, Townshend, Stanhope and Walpole becoming leaders of the new administration. Three years later this triumvirate was broken up, and Stanhope became leader. But when panic and indignation swept the country after the notorious South Sea scheme brought wide-spread

ruin, it was found that even members of Parliament had been receiving bribes. Stanhope was innocent, but in the act of defending himself against the accusation of corruption, burst a blood-vessel and died. Robert Walpole was now called upon to become leader, and he is the first to whom the title of Prime Minister belongs. For twenty-one years, that is to say from 1721 till 1742, he remained supreme in the Government, during which time he created the party system in its worst features, won party successes by corruption (if and when requisite), stabilized parliamentary institutions, yet in his own immoral, gross and unintellectual life set an evil example among politicians and national life generally. Plain-spoken, avaricious for power, jealous of interference, he was obviously a man to start quarrels.

One of these quarrels occurred in 1725, which caused his colleague, William Pulteney, to organize an opposition party of discontented Whigs who were not favorably disposed toward the Court's influence. His great ally was that curious character Viscount Bolingbroke, who had intrigued with the Pretender and for a time was exiled in France. This new party was known as the Patriots. Now while under Walpole the Cabinet system of governing was considerably developed, it was not till the time of the younger Pitt that it was entirely free from royal interference. Supported by the moneyed classes, and by the Dissenters who were promised repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts; pursuing a policy of peace which enabled England to accumulate immense wealth by means of her ships trading east, south and west, Walpole was thus enabled to retain office this long while.

But while Pulteney attracted round himself all those whom Walpole had offended, there was also united in the opposition on Pulteney's side, the Prince of Wales.

Two years later George I died, and the Prince succeeded him. It was, though, the latter's wife, Caroline of Anspach, who was the actual ruler; so Walpole, after dismissal, was restored to his office. His position was exceptionally strong, and the Jacobite hopes had vanished. Now it was in this year (1727) that the elder Pitt had matriculated at Trinity College, Oxford. Four years later the Army interested him and he obtained a cornetcy, but after yet another four years Pitt turned his mind to politics, succeeded his brother Thomas in representing the family borough of Old Sarum and entered the House. Forthwith he allied himself to Pulteney's party. Seeing that Pitt was only twenty-seven years old, and there were others not much older, it is scarcely surprising that the nickname of "Boy Patriots" was bestowed.

Pitt's first speech in April, 1736, with its hardly veiled satire of the King, was of that venturesome impudence which characterizes many a young man just finding his feet. But, if he had established at once a spirit of independence, he promptly suffered to the extent that he was dismissed from the Army for his anti-regal words. What time Pitt's political ambitions began to increase, his courage to develop, his arts of speaking to receive their perfecting tuition, and his sarcasm to sharpen itself, he was reading his Demosthenes but not a great deal else. Ignorant concerning those matters of commerce and finance which were now becoming so ultra-important to the country; untouched by that Evangelical revival which started from John Wesley in 1729, when the latter was a junior Fellow at Lincoln College, Oxford, and was the first effort to thaw the dull chill of national religion; Pitt politically prospered as his party gained greater favor both inside and without the House.

Inasmuch as neither the division lists nor the speeches

were reported at this date, few people knew how members had voted; constituents were hoodwinked, corruption was easy, and Walpole organized it into a dangerously efficient system. But there came an end to even his lengthy tenure. The British mentality had for long rebelled against the Peace of Utrecht, one of whose conditions had expressly forbidden England from sending more than one merchant ship in a year to trade with the Spanish colonies. Of course English sailors and merchants with their love of liberty refused to obey this regulation, and thus there were collisions with the Spaniards. During one such incident a merchant sailor named Jenkins had his ear cut off by a Spaniard. Having arrived back in England, with the appendage preserved in cotton wool, the incident was made the most of by Walpole's opposers. Thus in 1739 Walpole was left with no choice; war with Spain was declared.

The first objective was to strike Spain in the New World. For this purpose Admiral Edward Vernon was selected. The son of a former Secretary of State, his rapid promotion was due chiefly to family influence. At this time he was a member of the House of Commons and sat for Ipswich. Bombastic and arrogant, he boasted that if he were allowed half a dozen ships he would soon take Porto Bello. He was therefore sent. He certainly did capture as he had promised, but the garrison had been already crippled with tropical fever, the fortifications were in bad condition, and the guns not yet mounted. When, however, he attacked Cartagena and failed, nor succeeded at Santiago de Cuba, the English public became intensely annoyed. Pulteney and his patriots made things incessantly hot for Walpole in the House, and finally Walpole was defeated in February, 1742. He resigned, and passed to the House of Lords.

With him fell a long-continued political system. By bribery and corruption, by royal support, by careful administration, by cautious finance, he had given the country that peaceful prelude, that solidarity of government and complete reconciliation with the Hanoverian dynasty which were necessary for future prosperity. At home his retirement made little difference to domestic policy. Pulteney did not take office, but went to the House of Lords and so lost most of his power.

The country was next to be troubled by foreign affairs. The new Ministry was favorable to the policy of allying with Austria against Spain and France. In the Mediterranean an engagement on February 22, 1744, between the English fleet under Admirals Matthews and Lestock engaged a combined Spanish-French fleet. Unfortunately, Lestock hated Matthews, disregarded the latter's signals, pertinaciously remained astern out of action and thus prevented a striking victory. An inquiry followed, Lestock was by amazing injustice acquitted, subsequently given another command, while Matthews was struck off the Navy List. But one must remember the latter had been a Member of Parliament, though on the side of the Opposition. Such was the virulence of the all-powerful party spirit.

It was the Stuart insurrection which created a great panic in London, and meanwhile two of the younger House of Commons members had been gaining for themselves no little distinction. Of these one was Henry Fox, who had entered upon his political career under Walpole's patronage. The other was William Pitt, only by a couple of years junior to Fox in respect of age. Fox was a clever debater and man of business. Pitt had been again returned for Old Sarum at the last election, and was fortunate in receiving a legacy of ten thousand pounds left him

by that eccentric Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, who admired his patriotism and died in October, 1744. Pitt, by his vigorous opposition to Hanoverianism, had already won for himself considerable popularity. He was ambitious for office, which was not immediately forthcoming and in fact vetoed by the King, just because Pitt so strongly objected to paying Hanoverians with English money.

We here watch the Pitt hereditary independence asserting itself, and early in 1745 that other inheritance of gout was so assertive that he had to lay up. During the following year he was with some difficulty made Vice-Treasurer of Ireland under Pelham, and a few months later Paymaster-General of the Forces and was sworn a member of the Privy Council. Fox was made Secretary-at-War. Pitt had pursued that path which so frequently in our own time has led ambitious men to office and even to the House of Lords: he had made himself to be in political circles a dangerous potential enemy. There was too much personality, too much vital energy in that constitution for him always to remain in a back seat content and innocuous. Better keep him as a friend.

No better service was ever done for Pitt's career than this appointment as Paymaster-General, for it disclosed to the parliamentarians and public his financial integrity as compared with existing and accepted graft. Normally, in peace times, the Paymaster-General additional to his salary was allowed to retain for himself the interest on about one hundred thousand pounds (which was the average amount kept in his official hands) and this appropriation was done openly. Pitt broke the custom. He was not a rich man, yet he would receive nothing but his bare entitled salary. And this attitude was a glorious advertisement for the future. Here,

argued the nation, was that almost extinct specimen—an honest statesman. Whatever else he may be, at least he is deserving of our confidence.

The Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle in 1748 was one of those lessons which history keeps on impressing, but politicians continually ignore at every international crisis. For it demonstrated the utter futility of war; that after all the fighting and bloodshed the nations concerned remained pretty much as they were previously; that England herself had gained nothing, but had incurred a debt of nearly eighty million pounds. So scarce was money that in the city of London the rate rose to twelve per cent. There followed eight quiet years, and as Pitt approached middle life he acquiesced in measures which his fiery youth had attacked. The ungainly Fox was his principal rival and in 1755 became leader of the House of Commons, Pelham having died the previous year. Pitt was not in office.

The calendar had been changed in 1752 by omitting the eleven days that followed September second, and the civil year began not on March twenty-fifth but on January first. It was on November 16, 1754, being by the new calendar just forty-six years old (though in actual existence several days younger), Pitt married* Hester, daughter of Richard Grenville and of Hester, Countess Temple. It was to be an exceedingly happy marriage, from which were to issue the following five children: (1) Hester, born in 1755, who was the favorite sister of the younger William Pitt. She married Charles (afterwards Third Earl) Stanhope, the politician and scientist who became a Fellow of the Royal Society and heartily

* They were married by special license, and went for their honeymoon to Wickham in Kent, but by November twenty-fifth Pitt was back in the House of Commons.

approved of the French Revolution. From this union, in turn, came the brilliant and witty but eccentric Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope, who in 1803-6, during the last days of her uncle, William Pitt the younger, kept house for him. She exercised an enormous political influence, but after her uncle's death went to the East. Settling among the Druses of Mount Lebanon she kept up a curious detached isolation from the rest of the world.

Next of the Great Commoner's children was (2) John, born in 1756, who entered the Army, became a general, commanded a brigade under the Duke of York in Holland during 1799, and maintained the Pitt hauteur of manner. He succeeded his father as Earl Chatham, whom he resembled in almost everything except brains, and made a conspicuous failure of the Walcheren expedition in 1809. In 1758 was born (3) Harriet, who wedded a Mr. Eliot. In 1759 was born (4) the most brilliant of all, William Pitt. And two years later there came into the world (5) James Charles, who was destined for the Navy. He died of fever in 1779.

For some years before his marriage to Lady Hester Grenville, Pitt had lived at Enfield: but it is with Hayes that his career is especially associated, and thither we must now turn our thoughts.

Chapter IV

HAYES AND HAPPINESS

Twelve miles from London, after you have passed through a chain of suburbs that ends in Bromley, you suddenly find yourself out in the open country and entering the village of Hayes. To-day this Kentish parish is just about to change from the eighteenth to the twentieth century; for very modern houses are beginning to alter the whole approach, and before long town-planners will have transformed the estates beyond all recognition. This is our last opportunity for inspecting the surroundings as they appeared to the Pitts.

Soon after his marriage in 1754 William Pitt came down here, and Hayes formed that home from which so many historic events sprang. Hayes village is prehistoric in its ancestry; on the common over a hundred ancient pit-dwellings, the homes of primitive man, exist. Roman bricks and tiles were found under the floor of the nave, when the church was being restored some eighty years since. When the Kentishmen, nearly five hundred years ago, rose in rebellion under Jack Cade, there were several parishioners from Hayes who took part. In more recent days there was John Piper, landlord of The George Inn near the church, who went to Edinburgh and organized the stage-coach traffic to London. To him Sir Walter Scott referred as "honest John Piper" in his introduction to *The Highland Widow.* In Hayes, too, resided Thomas Bowdler, who was born during the year that Pitt first settled here. Bowdler achieved his reputation by his *Family Shakespeare,* from which he had expurgated such words and expressions "which cannot with propriety be read aloud in a family"; and thus added a new word to the English language. Hither came also

Millais to stay at The George, when he was sketching a certain hollow oak, which is still in existence and known as "Millais' Oak." The artist has depicted it in *The Proscribed Cavalier.**

The small parish church of St. Mary, built of flint and stone, contains on the north side toward the west end a memorial plaque which was erected as recently as September of 1929. Unveiled by the present Lady Stanhope, it commemorates the father, William Pitt, who died within a few yards of this spot, and the son who was born in his father's house. Just across the road, facing the western door of the church, is a private entrance through a small gate into Hayes Place; so that the two Pitts, when they came forth to worship, had the equivalent of a private chapel immediately outside their grounds. In the parish register are still to be read the records of two sons' baptisms:

John, son of the Hon. William and Lady Esther Pitt, born Oct. 10, baptized Nov. 7, 1756.

William, son of the Hon. William and Lady Esther Pitt, born May 28, baptized July 3, 1759.

There is also the elder daughter's marriage:—

Charles L^{d}. Visc^{t}. Mahon [now Earl Stanhope] and the R^{t}. Hon. Lady Esther Pitt, married Dec. 19, 1774.

When the elder Pitt came down to Hayes, there were not more than about sixty houses. It was thus a small community with about a thousand acres of cultivated land, half being pasture and half arable, the soil mostly clay and gravel. Hayes Place was formerly the seat of the Scotts. In 1698 Stephen Scott transferred it to John

* I am indebted to some notes on the parish by its Rector, the Reverend Canon H. P. Thompson.

Harrison, who sold it to the elder William Pitt shortly after the latter's marriage. Originally Pitt purchased only the mansion and a few acres of land. But he pulled the house down, rebuilt it, purchased additional land till it extended to about a hundred acres. You approach it by a short winding carriage drive off the main road and find yourself at a comfortable two-story family home without any great architectural pretensions. The beautiful fireplaces have unfortunately gone, but the rooms are still highly suggestive of the eighteenth century. Even as we stand outside the front door, we can almost hear the sound of horses' hoofs, and the grinding of chariot wheels that have brought from London some important personage.

Through the house we can walk to catch the setting sun, as an unlimited view of rolling park stretches away to the westward. Here are stately cedars and tall oaks which the Great Commoner delighted in planting with his own hands. Here on this terrace he could sit out in the sun some times when his gout was bad. We can visualize him on his two crutches clattering over the floors to receive a maker of history. In that dining-room he entertained General Wolfe before the latter sailed away from England to add Canada to the Empire. There is over the house even to-day, when the motor omnibuses rumble along the road and an occasional airplane comes flying over the tree-tops, a wonderful and restful quietude which the Oracle of Hayes found essential for his life and work. Pictures of the past come flitting over the terrace. Here is the great man slowly pacing up and down, as the trees sway to the southwest wind, and he rehearses one of his forthcoming speeches, or chooses from the back of his brain the most suitable commander-in-chief for a new campaign. It is sad to think that this house may shortly be razed to the ground, for within its walls some of the

most momentous decisions in the world's progress have been taken. And as we peep through another window, can we not smile as we imagine that incident of Quebec's conqueror flourishing his sword with glorious bravado, boasting of the things that he would achieve, and so alarming the Great Commoner's pulse that he regretted he had "entrusted the fate of the country to such hands"?

At the end of the next year following his marriage, Pitt was both out of office and hard up. From his wife's brother, Earl Temple, he was able to borrow one thousand pounds a year till circumstances should brighten. Pitt knew his own value, quite realized that his energies would be required presently, but they would not be available except on his own conditions of independence. Men of unusually developed strong-mindedness are difficult to be placed when it comes to colleagues and team-work. Pitt was a capable egoist, but an egoist all the same, with the defects which belong to powerful individualism. He refused to work with Fox when a new Ministry was being formed. So in 1756 we find Pitt's qualifications so requisite that, in spite of his unpopularity in the highest circles, he is made Secretary of State and leader of the House of Commons with his brother-in-law, Lord Temple, as First Lord of the Admiralty.

In that year began the Seven Years' War. It was a logical outcome of the clashing interests of British and French aspirations in the East and West Indies and on the North American continent. So long as France possessed Canada, what security could there be for the thirteen British colonies, which had grown up as the result of planting Virginia and New England? Moreover, the rivalry in the East between the India Companies of France and England took a serious form when both sides had sought protection by drilling Indians to become soldiers. At sea Admiral Byng, when sent to relieve Mi-

norca, found himself engaged with the French fleet. But it is eloquent of the age that he went into battle with the unfortunate incident of Admiral Matthews vivid in his mind, and remembered that the latter had been cashiered for daring to leave his line. Thus, at the critical moment, Byng hesitated in the battle, made a muddle, became criminally cautious, preferred to think of the cast-iron formalism in tactics rather than to engage and risk defeat from superior forces. Minorca had to surrender, Byng was court-martialed, found guilty, condemned to death, and not even Pitt could save him. Byng was shot on board the *Monarch* at Portsmouth in March, 1757. The King did not disguise his hatred for both Pitt and Temple. That winter Pitt had been fighting against another of his gout attacks, and a month after Byng's execution found himself dismissed by his sovereign.

But it was a sign of the increasing power of people and the decreasing control by monarch that such was the public clamor, such was the country's indignation, that before June was out Pitt was again Secretary of State with supreme direction of war and foreign affairs. Here then was that greatest of opportunities: here was the chance to focus all the abilities inherited and personally developed. It was a terrible hour for even one of Pitt's self-confidence. But his nature was the exact opposite of Byng's. He was not nervous of responsibility, he was not the least intimidated by cut-and-dried formality, he refused to be enslaved by tradition, he was too much of an independent individual ever to interpret difficulties except in his own way.

And fortunate for England it was that both Pitt and the opportunity were so perfectly matched. It was the triumph of mind not merely over monarch, money difficulties and ill-health, but over the gravest menace which

threatened to crush his country for all time. For England in losing Minorca had almost lost faith, as she had forfeited confidence in her rulers. At this crisis there was needed one who sufficiently believed in himself to inspire trust in a dispirited people. Pitt was that unique man. "My Lord, I am sure that I can save the country," he told the Duke of Devonshire, "and that nobody else can." If that phrase had come from the mouth of any other contemporary, it would have been an empty boast. When uttered by Pitt, these words were an expression of courageous resolve and turned out to be the nature of prophecy. He had thought it carefully out in the repose of Hayes, away from strife and turmoil.

How and why did he save the country? The answer is invisibly carved on the walls, the bricks, the very cedars of Hayes Place that were his intimates. Insight and energy: those were the secret words. He saw the problem as the late Marshal Foch viewed the other Great War when everything was at its worst; and with similar courage. But Pitt, having appreciated that the French colonies must be attacked while France was kept busy in Europe, organized operations on such a vast scale that while French possessions were being assailed in every part of the world, the British fleet swept the seas. In short, Pitt knew what he wanted, and knew how to choose the right men.

Thus followed success after success beginning with 1758. In North America came Louisburg, Fort Duquesne, Quebec, and all that this would mean later; Guadeloupe and Dominica in the West Indies; Minden in Europe, and Quiberon Bay. As for India, the victory of Clive at Plassey in 1757 had made the rich plain of Bengal to become British, and this was to be one of the decisive battles in Anglo-Indian history. But the battle

of Wandewash near Madras gave the final decision to French rivalry in the East, as Wolfe had settled that matter in the West.

The death of George II in 1760 saw Pitt at the very height of his success. As one of his contemporaries wrote at the time, "the English were happy and united at home, and feared and respected everywhere abroad; the British ensigns were displayed in the remotest regions; and the nation's honor advanced to a pitch unknown before." But Pitt pressed on with his job, well realizing that nothing but the complete humiliation of France could bring a real peace. "The situation which Pitt occupied at the close of the reign of George the Second," wrote Macaulay, "was the most enviable ever occupied by any public man in English history. He had conciliated the King; he domineered over the House of Commons; he was adored by the people; he was admired by all Europe. . . . The Great Commoner . . . might look down with scorn on coronets and garters. The nation was drunk with joy and pride."

The happiest and most devoted of husbands, his young family toddling about in the salubrious air of Hayes Park, Pitt during the strenuous period of 1759-61 was compelled to spend much of his time in London within close vicinity to his duties. He therefore had as his town house that charming building No. 10 (now called Chatham House) at the northwest corner of St. James's Square, which is three doors away from the present quarters of the Windham Club. This was given up in October. For in this month he felt compelled to resign, since his enthusiasm for prosecuting the war was thwarted by the King's determination through Lord Bute to break up Whig influence.

If Pitt had become by war all-powerful and all-

popular, he was not a philosopher who could readjust his mind to its consequences. If his self-confidence and haughtiness had become during these years unbearably imperious, then what wonder that he had stirred up no little enmity among others in high places? He had become war-mad; he had piled up for the nation immense war debts; he had begun to lose all sense of proportion. But the new King could not behave otherwise than nobly in parting with the Minister who had saved the country and so rapidly extended the Empire. Pitt was offered the appointment of Governor of Canada. But the gouty middle-aged statesman was anxious chiefly for his wife, and infant family; so, in consideration of his great and important services, while Pitt received a pension of three thousand pounds a year for three lives, Lady Hester, his wife, was raised to the dignity of Baroness of Chatham.

Thus the Commoner retired to Hayes Place and busied himself with his landscape gardening and keeping in touch with the political current. He had lived at high pressure, but out of inferior conditions he had performed miracles. Peace came in 1763, England secured Canada, the danger to Anglo-American colonies was removed. At this time the latter contained about two million people (of whom three-quarters were whites). About one-third of the entire British trade was being done with these colonists who had so rapidly increased that they numbered the equivalent of one-third of the population in England and Wales. No wonder that the city of London's merchants and the public in general were grateful to Pitt.

If the Navy had needed reforming, the Army was bad enough. Four years before he bade farewell to Pitt Wolfe wrote: "I have but a very mean opinion of the infantry." For its discipline was bad, the men not in-

frequently murdered one another and their own officers. Recruited from the lowest of the low, such as lousy tramps and jail-birds, their training was the worst in Europe. Dirty, drunken, insolent, immoral, slack and unsoldierly, bad at marching, weak in musketry, their red-and-gold coats were the only bright features in all their make-up. Life, except on active service, was deadly dull, and little enough was done for their happiness. Even the voluntarily enlisted men, who had been tempted by bounties, had reason to regret their choice of occupation. But their officers were so often overbearing that they would mortally wound any civilian who had the temerity to cause annoyance. Corrupt, profligate, with little to do and few public news-sheets to peruse, such leaders were as bored as they were brutal. As to the cavalry, they were for the most part merely unwieldy masses of horsemen. Still, this was the Army which under Pitt's magic touch covered itself with glory at the supreme test.

It would be difficult to say where the effect of these Pitt victories ceased. The removal of impediments to trade meant a stimulus for manufacturers, and that in turn meant a call for families to leave the country and settle in towns. Cotton and woolen goods, coal mining, pottery, hardware, increased carriage of commodities, gave such places as Manchester, Liverpool, Newcastle, Birmingham, Sheffield, Bristol, and such routes as rivers and canals, a rising importance. England, in fact, could not thoroughly realize that a new revolution was already in process of being made.

But there is an element of tragedy beginning when Pitt, the people's darling, was compelled by intrigue to retire into his Hayes background. A strange, even pathetic figure, awe-inspiring, formidable, difficult of ap-

proach, sublime and isolated in his Kentish retreat, a wounded lion moving painfully about his cage, he was true to family type and reproducing the characteristics of Governor Pitt in his later days. There is something solemn and impenetrable about the man who now develops gradually into a person of incomprehensible mystery as the years go by.

The mind so fertile in resource, the genius so magnificent, the boundless energy, seem to have become strained during those brilliant war years. Exemplary in his private life, with no apparent vices other than excessive pride and avarice, this tall and imposing person with the keen eyes, the super-dignified deportment, the pedantic manner in conversation and letter-writing, the scrupulous regard for his attire when seen in public, now begins to taste life's bitterness. Those who were accustomed to see him always in his full-dress coat and tie wig in the House of Commons, the very expression of ostentatious pomp, never self-revealing for one moment but ever encased in a hard artificiality, beheld the actor robed in his dressing gown and slippers, his gouty limbs swathed in flannels, a martyr to the tyranny of disease. But his indomitable courage, his explosive invective, his fighting instincts and his violent indignations continued right till the end. His face was getting thin, his crutches were becoming almost by their protracted use portions of himself, yet at the end of 1762 he entered the House of Commons and for just under three and one half hours spoke in his impassioned manner against the treaty with Spain. The pangs of gout made him leave without waiting for the division.

His brother-in-law, George Grenville, who had succeeded Lord Bute, was incapable of Pitt's standard. During the 1765 session, when Grenville's Ministry passed

the Stamp Act and so idiotically offended the American colonists, Pitt's health had detained him at Hayes. Macaulay considered Grenville's administration as the worst that governed England since the Revolution. It was indeed to bring about not the kind of reform that Pitt had started, but a revolution in America: the very last thing that the Great Commoner relished. His health having been for a time improved by a visit to Bath, Pitt reappeared in the House once more the man of fight. Here was the veteran denying the right of the Mother Country to tax her colonies, and he rejoiced that the Americans had resisted. "Three millions of people," he rapped out at his hearers, "three millions of people so dead to all the feelings of liberty as voluntarily to submit to be slaves, would have been fit instruments to make slaves of the rest."

It was mainly through the efforts of Pitt and Burke that the Stamp Act was repealed. That he refused to join the Marquis of Rockingham's Ministry, which had come into power on Grenville's retirement, was regrettable, but his uncertain health was befogging his clear vision. Thus did the future history of the American states hang for a moment on the Pitt hereditary disease. His character now becomes more and more difficult to follow. On the fall of the Rockingham Administration in July, 1766, Pitt was asked by the King to form a ministry. He accepted, but himself took the sinecure of Lord Privy Seal, and was raised to the peerage as Viscount Pitt of Burton Pynsent in the County of Somerset, and Earl of Chatham in the County of Kent.

For by the will of Sir William Pynsent, a Somersetshire Baronet who died in January, 1765, Pitt had been left an estate at Burton Pynsent together with nearly three thousand pounds a year. He had never met Pitt,

GEORGE GRENVILLE

Uncle of William Pitt the younger. It was during the time when Grenville was Prime Minister that the American Stamp Act of 1765 was passed.

but made the bequest in consideration of the statesman's public conduct and administration. In the following year Pitt sold Hayes Place to the Honorable Thomas Walpole, who cased the house with white brick and considerably improved it. There can be no question but that Pitt's reason was passing through variations. He became excitable, morose, a squandermaniac, a sullen melancholic, with exhibitions at times of megalomania. For a while he settled at Northend (later called Wildwood) House, Hampstead, or at his new Somerset home where cedars sent from London were being planted by day and night. His disordered mind manifested itself in capricious tastes such as food, excessive display of his liveried servants, shutting himself up for weeks and being generally intolerable.

Thanks to Lady Chatham's efforts, Thomas Walpole was persuaded to sell Hayes Place* back to Chatham in December, 1767, whither the man of mystery retired as if to his cell. Walpole's white bricks round the house smite the eye to this day, and remind one that they were for months the outer and visible shell which hid Chatham from the rest of the world. For the man who saved England was now paying the penalty which pertains to all who have been carried along by the wave of popularity. The crest had collapsed and dropped its burden. His acceptance of a peerage had—quite unreasonably—created public anger and mistrust. His pride was too great for him to suffer unpopularity in his present condition.

To his fellow peers he had shown himself despotically impossible and quarrelsome, so that from November 11, 1766, the date of his maiden speech in the House of

* Pitt had sold Hayes Place and grounds to Walpole in June, 1766, for eleven thousand seven hundred eighty pounds; but Walpole having added to the property, the price Pitt now had to pay in 1767 was twenty-four thousand five hundred thirty-two pounds.

Lords, until January 9, 1770, he never made an appearance therein. On October 14, 1768, in a letter written on his behalf by his wife, the almost forgotten statesman requested of the King permission to resign the Privy Seal. And then an extraordinary thing happened. There came a severe attack of gout which drove away this mental malady, he came up to town and startled the world by appearing one July day in 1769 at the King's levee. When in the following January he appeared in the House of Lords, and spoke, it was as if he had come from the dead.

But he was still a fiery force, with his mind set on liberty. During the next two years his health prevented him from any save occasional attendances, yet in May, 1774, we find him beseeching the House to be more gentle in their governing of America; in the following January pleading for the King's troops to be recalled from Boston, and in February introducing another bill to prevent taxation. Chatham failed in his efforts, went back to his Hayes retreat and was again very ill. Two years pass by, but his spirit was still to reassert itself when physically feeble he came up to Westminster and moved an address to the Crown for the stoppage of hostilities in America. Once more he failed. But next came the most dramatic scene of his life.

An actor to the last, his final appearance on the stage which he had held for so many years was to be the most theatrical exit. His life was full of the sharpest contrasts, and there were no half-tones. Few public men have ever lived in such startling limelight, yet withdrawn into such complete obscurity. "I am just going to Hayes, for some hours' recess, that I want much," he would write to his sister on Saturday morning, where that charming society of his domesticated wife, and even the cricket matches of the village, would help him occasionally to

forget that England's destiny lay on his shoulders. Even his spasms of gout were not allowed to be mere private and personal incidents but part of the national drama. They became, as the late Lord Rosebery expressed it, "part of the history of England."

It is almost beyond comprehension that Chatham should have allowed the actor in him to dominate the rest of his personality so completely. Somehow he could never forget the stage, never obliterate the environment of an audience. He was too self-conscious to be natural and the simple human being. For many years he had been acquainted with Lady Hester and waited till he was forty-six before offering her marriage, when she was already thirty-three. Proud but poor, he wrote from Bath (where he was taking the waters for his gout) a letter to his sister, Miss Ann Pitt, dated October 21, 1754, in which he announces his bethrothal thus: "Lady Hester Grenville has consented to give herself to me . . . she has generosity and goodness enough to join part of her best days to a very shattered part of mine." His love-letters were as stilted, pompous and artificial as a minuet. But that was peculiar of his correspondence with others, so that this annoying, roundabout, evasive verbosity withholds all self-revelation and prevents posterity from ever knowing the real Chatham hidden within the red-bricked walls of his park or the white-bricked armor of his house. "The life of Chatham is extremely difficult to write, and, strictly speaking, never can be written at all. It is difficult because of the artificial atmosphere in which he thought it well to envelop himself, and because the rare glimpses which are obtainable of the real man reveal a nature so complex, so violent, and so repressed." *

**Chatham, His Early Life and Connections,* by Lord Rosebery. London, 1914. New York and London, Harper Bros. 1910.

This absence of frankness is noticeably contrasted with a wife who was all sincerity and domestic devotion. Immaculate, austere, decorous, well-bred, frigid, intelligent, comely yet not beautiful, good-tempered, self-effacing, a home-loving woman who was content to remain in the background all the time, living only for her husband and children as tender nurse and faithful housekeeper, reveling in his glory, full of humanity, this auburn-haired Lady Hester was the exact opposite of Chatham's sister, Betty, who was a vicious adventuress and lived for a time openly as the mistress of Lord Talbot. But to few women in the world's evolution has it been granted, as it was to the hostess of Hayes, to be wife of one and mother of another William who rivaled each other in such eminence. All that these two illustrious statesmen owed to the loving care of this quiet religious-minded woman within that secluded retreat we shall never know; but we can to no little extent imagine her anxious, patient task, as she endured the headstrong violent Pitt eccentricities.

During his retirement from politics Chatham spent much of his time at Hayes greatly improving the grounds and plantations of his favorite residence. Admirers had rained gold snuff-boxes into his enfeebling hands, but they could not present him with good health or undo the harm that had been set going in rousing the fears and resentment which were so manifest in colonial America. Long and violent debates in Parliament, and his own attack on the Government during the autumn of 1777 availed nothing; he was no longer the great oracle and impelling force, but a tired man in senile decay.

He was under the care of Anthony Addington, who after a school career at Winchester had proceeded to

Oxford where he took his M.D. For a time he practised at Reading, but afterwards came to London, where he became so fashionable that his lucrative work enabled him to retire into the country by 1780. Now it is significant that Doctor Addington was a specialist in mental diseases, but he was also the confidential friend of Chatham, attended George III during the latter's insanity, and for a time looked after the younger Pitt. So strong was the family friendship that the latter from boyhood was on close terms with Addington's eldest son, Henry, who entered politics and was destined not only to be one of Pitt's most ardent supporters but even succeeded the latter as Prime Minister, and was eventually raised to the peerage as Viscount Sidmouth.

Now early in 1778 not even Doctor Addington's influential advice could retain his fiery patient down at Hayes. The Duke of Richmond had come to the conclusion that the American colonies were lost beyond all recovery, that it was useless to prosecute hostilities any further and had given notice to move an address to the Crown for withdrawing British forces. Chatham was determined to appear that day in the House of Lords. Nothing could keep the sick but excitable lion at Hayes, so wrapped in flannel, hobbling on his crutches, supported by his son, William, and his son-in-law, Lord Mahon, attired as if for some full dress occasion in his rich velvet coat but ill-fitting wig, he entered, bowed with his studied courtliness and waited till the Duke of Richmond had addressed the House.

Then up rose the weary body with the emaciated countenance, as the thin voice tried to utter the disjointed protests against the independence of America, the dismemberment of the monarchy. It was one of the most historic occasions in all the years of the English Parlia-

ment, when every eye and every ear sought to miss no particle of this most tense situation. A dramatic stillness listened to the old warrior's halting discourse, confused and painful though it was. He sat down and the Duke again spoke. Once more did Chatham, explosive and with that insane vehemence which characterized the last period of his ancestor, Governor Pitt, again rise to his feet. But it was his last gesture; the great actor who through so many years and on so many great occasions had thrilled the House was now making his positively final appearance.

The last act of his last play was now being performed. He had almost ended the closing scene. His death occurred not quite in the public view, but only just off stage. For something had suddenly arrested his powers of speech, he clutched at his breast, collapsed in an apoplectic fit, fell back into the arms of some brother peers, was carried temporarily to Downing Street, remained there several days, was then driven down to Hayes, where he lingered till on May eleventh in his seventieth year he passed away. If his finale was theatrical, it was in accordance with what he, the greatest of English orators, would have wished. If all his pomp and popularity had so vanished that he had scarcely a dozen friends left in politics, his spectacular departure so aroused the national emotions that they remembered again his former achievements.

Was he heavily in debt? Parliament voted the sum of twenty thousand pounds to clear it off, together with an annuity of four thousand pounds on his successors in the earldom.

His obsequies were protracted. On June seventh and eighth his body lay in state in the Painted Chamber, and on June ninth with William Pitt as chief mourner, and Chatham's banner displayed in procession, the body was

taken to be interred at the North Transept of Westminster Abbey. He had "expired, as it were, in the arms of his country," was the apposite remark of his brilliant son, William. The spirit of him who had once revived the national spirit had gone out in full splendor. For years after the funeral flags were still preserved in the chancel of Hayes church, but to-day time has withered, and replicas have recently taken their place in that quiet building. The village does not forget.

There still survives a voluminous correspondence despatched by Doctor Addington to Lady Chatham, which indicates the cooperation that went on during those anxious years on behalf of the gouty patient. These unpublished letters, written in the physician's clear hand, addressed, "To The Countess of Chatham at Hayes near Bromley, Kent," from his house in Clifford Street, London, show also the friendship which the Pitts entertained for their medical adviser. But always Addington's tone is one of profound and almost obsequious respect. From the careful manner with which Lady Chatham evidently preserved these documents it is obvious that her regard for Addington both professionally and as a family confidant, was high. When Addington was unable to drive down to Hayes, he would send the anxious Countess advice as to Chatham's diet and medicines. The following is an example:*

My Good Lady,

A glass of Cyprus wine every day after dinner will, in my opinion, be of service to Lord Chatham, especially during the cold weather . . .

My Good Madam,
Yours most Faithful & obliged
Humble Servt. A. Addington
Janʸ. 27th. 1776.

* "Chatham Papers," Public Record Office.

A year later, on January 19, 1777, Addington writes to tell her:

We are now got to the tenth day, my Good Madam, & one Leg is swell'd to the utmost extent, & looks very red . . . we ought to do nothing directly or indirectly, that may tend to reduce the swelling; but going abroad in the coach, or lessening at this time the quantity of wine, would probably reduce it.

A few weeks after the funeral, Lady Chatham sent the doctor eight hundred pounds for his services, and on August 29, 1778, Addington writes to thank her "for your most obliging Letter, in which was inclosed your very ample draft on Mr. Coutts & Co. for eight Hun$^{d.}$ Pounds, a noble Gratuity for my poor endeavours to serve the most Perfect Man I ever knew." This letter was addressed to her "at Burton Pynsent near Lamport by Somerton Bag—Somersetshire." His interest in young William Pitt was kept up, and when the latter was still waiting for his chance of entering political life, the two would occasionally meet. Thus, three days before Christmas in 1779, Addington wrote to inform the mother that he had seen William for an hour. "He looks & is well, tho' very tall & slender. I hope & trust he will be able to bear reasonable application, & to make a very active, useful, & shining member of society."

The family doctor well knew the anxiety of the widowed mother for the clever but not too healthy son.

Chapter V

PREPARATION AND PURPOSE

Chatham created a tradition. He represented and gloried in the power and liberty of the English people. He fought for the integrity and freedom of her institutions at home, no less than for her reputation among the nations of the world. But his work was not complete, and needed all the talents of another Pitt to carry on reforms through an era of revolution that had not yet reached its logical conclusions. It is my submission that the work of the two William Pitts can no more be regarded as separate studies than we can contemplate the nineteenth century without first understanding the eighteenth. So many threads had been left loose and dangling, so many inferences were waiting to be drawn from newly presented premises, that it would have been an unkind fate had England been deprived of another genius to gather up these threads and weave them into a national habit; to elucidate the new truths of reform and progress.

Not otherwise can we believe that in the great scheme of things the younger Pitt was allowed to have his exceptional birth, breeding, environment and education all perfectly synchronized so that the father had barely departed from the arena than the son arrived fully trained to carry on the great contest. The items fit in so perfectly, and the coincidences are so special, that we can not dare to suggest it was mere chance that the younger man stepped into the void left by the elder. On the contrary all the accidents of ancestry, time, talents and opportunity appear to have been arranged on a definite predestined plan.

We have seen how Chatham's generations of fore-

bears had developed for him the requisite virulent independence and an organizing ability to rule. We have noted the persistent leaning to the political life. But now we get something more in addition to an even intensified taste for parliamentary preferences. Here comes a child into the world of parents aged, respectively, fifty-one and thirty-eight. Experience teaches us that the son of such a union is usually serious-minded and clever. But not merely was the father steeped in statesmanship, but the mother's two brothers, Earl Temple and George Grenville, were politicians. Moreover the very atmosphere and conversation at Hayes did not exist unless it were heavily charged with the science of organizing the country's government. Even young William's feeble health was a primary advantage; for it gave him that political-minded Doctor Addington, and it kept the child at home to concentrate on mental rather than physical development.

Thus from the earliest years of consciousness, we are able to start with a perfect specimen of heredity, a wonderful mind, a prodigy that is not preposterous. Even the year of his birth was that annus mirabilis of Quebec, Minden and Quiberon Bay. And the remarkable thing is that all this dazzling beginning increases in brilliance. It was on May 28, 1759, that Pitt the elder wrote to inform his sister of the younger William's birth in that room which looked out over the verdant expanse of Hayes Park. We can see the middle-aged and much occupied statesman sitting down to write one of his stilted letters as follows: "I have the satisfaction to acquaint you of what you was [sic] so good to wish to hear; Lady Hester was safely delivered of a Boy this morning, after a labour rather severe, but she and the Child are, thank God, as well as can be."

As not infrequently happens, young William Pitt in childhood was physically feeble and the source of considerable anxiety. But his intellect was remarkably powerful for his age. In that self-contained secluded Hayes Place, near enough to London to be in touch with the great world movements which were going on by land and sea, yet sufficiently apart from the distractions of the city's social and business life, remote enough, also, from political schemers and job-hunters, the Great Commoner was able to give personal attention to his son's education. Ill-health made it impracticable for William to follow his father's example and go to Eton, but Hayes was a public school and a little world of its own.

First and foremost it was a home of happiness, with parents mutually devoted to each other, and both of them adoring their children. But there was so much coming and going of eminent visitors, the very table talk was so intimately concerned with the relation of Britain to international politics, and there was no other burning subject; that we can readily understand how the impressionable years of William were affected. If it be true that the first seven are those which decide a child's future character, can we not appreciate the inevitability of the boy for political aspirations? The conversation of elders, the respect which he bespoke by reason of his parentage, the encouragement which was given by the father to lure the boy into asking questions,—these all assisted in the development of a receptive and inquiring mind. Policies and members of Parliament were discussed and criticized openly before him; statesmanship and speeches were the most usual of subjects within that family circle. The East India Company with its huge fleet and its immense power in the East, the North American colonies with their increasing wealth and feeling for a separate exis-

tence, the violent talk that went on everywhere concerning taxation, the exciting news of battles, sieges, surrenders, victories and treaties, the personal animosities and wire-pulling, these were the items which were of perpetual interest throughout those important infantile years. The feebleness of body became rather a help than a hindrance: it kept him indoors, within touch of events, when many a lad might have been playing games at the other end of the park.

The initial and formative part of the boy's life was thus spent under his father's eye in an atmosphere perfectly suited for accustoming the young mind to endless talk about troubles abroad, anxieties afloat, integrity of the constitution, preservation of civil and religious privileges, England's independence and the need of reforms. Then at age six William was placed under the care of the Reverend Edward Wilson, who came as tutor to the house, but during the next two years William's health was so indifferent that any serious education was most difficult. Wilson was a graduate of Pembroke Hall, Cambridge, and before dying in 1804 became prebendary of Gloucester as well as canon of Windsor. But he became in the Pitt household a kind of trusty nurse.

When William was seven, he and the rest of the children were sent to take advantage of the sea air at Weymouth, which during Georgian times was becoming fashionable. Wilson was in charge of the youngsters and used to keep their mother informed by letter as to their health. Thus on August 2, 1766, we find him reporting that "Mr. William" is now very nearly well. But while this was the year when the owner of Hayes was promoted to the House of Lords, young William's mind had been thinking of the title to descend through Lady Chatham and had not failed to grasp what that would mean: the

child was already father of the man who should some day lead the Lower House. "Three months ago," writes Wilson to Lady Chatham of this son, "he told me he was glad he was not the eldest son, but that he could serve his country in the House of Commons like his papa."

A fortnight later this tutor writes to tell her of an incident which had occurred when Wilson took the Pitt children from Weymouth to Abbotsbury in order to see the swannery. Here they became acquainted with a Mr. Trenchard, who was very civil to them, and he was invited therefore to Weymouth. Now Trenchard was a retired captain of a merchant vessel and strongly appealed to William's inquiring intelligence. "The captain had entertained him so much with a lecture on navigation and the anatomy of a ship, that Mr. William, entirely of his own accord, pressed him to stay all night, told him we had beds enough, and to prevent Mrs. Trenchard's being under any uneasy apprehension, he undertook to send a servant directly and inform her of it . . . the captain was struck dumb with astonishment."

Even after making allowances for any tutorial obsequiousness, or the expectation that the Pitt influence would some day obtain him a canonry, there is still sufficient evidence that the seven-year-old boy was remarkably wise and inquiring. A month later Wilson was able to say that his pupil still continued to surprise and astonish him, and was full of ardor. Weymouth certainly did considerably benefit the lad's health, and he had grown a great deal during his stay. In February of that same year Chatham used to make reference, in corresponding with the boy's mother, to "eager Mr. William," but in May was still feeling "some anxiety for William . . . our loved boy."

We can picture this lean child returning home in-

vigorated by that good sea air of Dorset which had in previous generations assisted the Pitts to carry out their tasks. He is vivacious without being a nuisance, he can enter into adults' conversation without shyness or self-consciousness, he thoroughly enjoys his lessons, and he is growing up with a manly character though his body can not be strong till some years later, and perhaps not even then. Whenever gout permits, Chatham continues his instruction and there are few days when he does not read a chapter of the Bible with his children.

There were times when this somewhat difficult invalid of a father could not endure the sound of children in the house, and for this reason they had to be accommodated in an adjacent building; but we can well enough understand that a sexagenarian, with swollen joints and a brain that was becoming diseased could scarcely bear the shrill noises of romping youngsters all the while. That he loved them, and William especially, is manifested by the Chatham correspondence over and over again. Exactly five years after the Weymouth visit, Chatham writes anxiously on the first of August to Doctor Addington: "Our dear William is wan, and extremely lean." But toward the end of November, while the family are at Burton Pynsent the father writes to this family physician that "our dear William has held out well, on the whole."

The anxieties of Chatham, "the idol of England, the terror of France, the admiration of the whole civilized world," were thus concerned not exclusively with affairs of state. Had any fatal illness assailed the young William, it is not unlikely that the father's mind would have become permanently unhinged, nor is it too much if we suggest that the boy's weak health till the end of Chatham's life had something to do with the father's breakdown. There are cases when it becomes impossible for

the same man to sustain anxious suspense both public and private.

But there are delightful family touches such as that of August, 1772, when the family were at Burton Pynsent. William, with his usual cleverness, had written a play. It was not the kind of thing that would have the remotest chance of success in the theater, but it was exactly the effort which one would expect of a William Pitt at thirteen. Written in blank verse, with five acts, containing no love interest but entirely concerned with politics, the drama centering round a regency, it was entitled *Laurentius, King of Clarincum.* This play the Pitt children produced and themselves acted on the twenty-second of that month, the audience consisting solely of Lord and Lady Chatham and intimate friends. It is a rather curious comment that when Doctor Addington was present at one of these performances and remarked on the excellent manner in which the boys had rendered their speeches, Chatham answered, "William is certainly very correct, but Pitt will be *the* orator." The father was scarcely a correct prophet in this particular: for William certainly was to become one of England's greatest orators, while Lord Pitt (second Earl of Chatham) never became anything except a glorious failure of forbidding manner.

By the time William was fourteen he was intellectually the equivalent of any youth of eighteen, so it was decided to send him up to Cambridge. Under Wilson's tuition he had made excellent progress in Greek and Latin classics as well as mathematics. Here was a boy who was naturally clever, because there was no alternative to be otherwise. He was as fond of bird's-nesting as was any other lad. But there was at the back of him that father who was always guiding his talents with meticu-

lous care. In spite of the boy's expressed ambition for the House of Commons, Chatham was intending him for the law. William would have to earn his own living, and the Bar was a profession that permitted also a political career. Never was a man more lucky in his parentage than William Pitt; never did a young man find the path to attainment so smoothly paved.

At home there was his father selecting from among his books the best examples of oratory for him to study closely. Then he, who had for so long dominated the audience of Parliaments, would rehearse and instruct his successor. William was to acquire readiness in speech —that wonderful facility, that verbal grace, which in a very few years more was to grip the attention of the House of Commons as only a Pitt had succeeded hitherto. So there outside Hayes house stands William holding in his hand some Latin or Greek volume in its dark leather binding and yellow leaves. He is bidden to translate it at sight and interpret it aloud in the purest English, stopping only to choose some better word or smoother phrasing. Or sometimes the son is reciting from memory passages from Shakespeare, Milton and other English poets, while the veteran orator listens and comments.

It was thus that by long years one Pitt was training another as his successor. The mantle was to fall not accidentally but on intended shoulders.

It was not for Oxford, Chatham's old university, but for Cambridge that William was to be destined; and the reason is obvious. Pitt was extremely young for an undergraduate, and it was decided to send his tutor Wilson with him for a few weeks "on account of the private manner in which Mr. Pitt had been educated and the extreme delicacy of his constitution." Perhaps it seems to us a curious arrangement that the future leader of

English affairs should be nurse-tended and not allowed to find his own feet among other students of the University; but Wilson being still retained, it was natural enough that his old college, Pembroke Hall, should be selected. In April, 1773, William's name was entered for residence in October. June found the Pitt boys enjoying a holiday at that other Dorset seaside resort Lyme Regis, accompanied by their father. William was now a tall fellow of fourteen, who loved horses and riding, enjoyed exploring beautiful parts of the country, and seemed to be getting stronger. Chatham writes to his mother, "It is a delight to see William see nature in her free and wild compositions"; and refers to him as "the philosopher," "counsellor," "our intelligent sweet boy."

At the beginning of October we find this overgrown boy setting out for Cambridge with the staid Mr. Wilson, who had formerly been rector (during thirty years) of Binfield, where Pope had spent his youth. Such journeys were not undertaken lightly in those days; and modern undergraduates accustomed to snatching hurried journeys by train and motor will find it amusing to read of Pitt spending several days on his way. Turnpikes had been established during the last forty years, yet even the best roads across England were very bad and full of deep ruts; and it was this incidentally which, by preventing locomotion, shut villages up in smug self-satisfaction and ignorance. The Edinburgh to London coach used to run once a month, and with the exception of the London-Chelmsford, London-Barnet, and Salisbury-Romsey roads all were so bad that capsizes were frequently caused.

At the wayside inns there was accommodation of a sort, with beer and supper. You could have lobster, chicken and cold ham, tart, anchovies and cheese for one shilling and fourpence; or you could partake of mutton,

duck, tart, cheese, mushrooms, capers, walnuts and gherkins for two shillings. There was excellent beer, there was that somewhat rare thing a newspaper, but above all there was a hearty welcome from the red-faced landlord. He was glad to see you, for there was little profit to be obtained from the agricultural laborers, whose weekly wages averaged from four shillings and sixpence to ten shillings and ninepence, and years of scarcity had now set in.

When at length Pitt reached Cambridge, he sat down in his college room and wrote the following letter to his father, then at Burton Pynsent:

Pembroke Hall, Friday morning
October 8, 1773

I have the pleasure of writing to my dear father, after having breakfasted upon college rolls, and made some acquaintance with my new quarters, which seem, on the short examination I have given, neat and convenient. But before I apply myself to any other employment, I make use of broken minutes, to inform you of our being seated within these venerable walls.

Our journey from the place at which I had the happiness of addressing a letter for Burton Pynsent has been accomplished with much ease. By reaching Hartford Bridge the second night, we had abundance of time upon our hands, so that we might have reached our goal the fourth night; but it was judged better to come in, in a morning, that we might have the day before us to settle in our new habitation.

They had traveled through Staines and Windsor Park, the whole journey taking five days. Pitt was not long in learning that

Pembroke was a sober, staid college, and nothing but solid study there. I find, indeed, we are to be grave in apparel, as even a silver button is not allowed to sparkle along our quadrangles etc.; so that my hat is soon stripped

NEW PALACE YARD, WESTMINSTER

Showing the typical eighteenth-century equipages of Members of Parliament

of its glories, in exchange for a plain loop and button.

I must beg you to pardon all the irregularities of this hasty epistle, as it has been frequently broken off by the intervention of tailor, hosier, hatter, sempstress, and others; and since by the obliging visits of many of the fellows of the college, who inquired after you and all at Burton Pynsent: they were in great hopes to have had the pleasure of Pitt's company here, and many other civilities. I have not yet seen Dr. Brown;* he not being at present in college, but is expected every hour. Among others, the proctor has called upon me: this first was a friendly visit, and may, perhaps be considered as a good omen.

I have nothing more to add, but duty and love in abundance to my mother and brothers and sisters; some of whom will, I hope, convey for me the kindest remembrance to Mrs. Sparry.†

I am, my dear father,
Your most dutiful
And affectionate son
WILLIAM PITT.

But Chatham had been thinking and wondering about his boy anxiously. Long before William's Cambridge letter could reach Somerset, the father must needs sit down and write to Pembroke Hall from Burton Pynsent. The letter is dated October 9, 1773, and through this pompous artificial style we can still penetrate into that affectionate happiness which prevailed in the family:

Thursday's post brought us no letter from the dear traveller: we trust this day will prove more satisfactory. It is the happy day that gave us your brother and will not be less in favour with all here, if it should give us, about four o'clock, an epistle from my dear William. By that hour, I reckon, we shall be warm in our cups, and shall

* Master of Pembroke Hall.

† Mrs. Sparry was housekeeper at Burton Pynsent. When Pitt's health broke down, she was sent to Cambridge to nurse him, and she looked after him on the way home.

not fail to pour forth, with renewed energy, grateful libations over the much wished tidings of your prosperous progress towards your destination. We compute, that yesterday brought you to the venerable aspect of Alma Mater, and that you are invested today with the *toga virilis*. Your race of manly virtue and useful knowledge is now begun; and may the favour of Heaven smile upon the noble career. . . . How happy, my loved boy, is it, that your mamma and I can tell ourselves, there is at Cambridge, *one* without a beard "and all the elements so mixed in him, that Nature might stand up and say, This is a Man!"

I now take leave for to-day, not meaning this for what James* calls a regular letter, but a flying thought, that wings itself towards my absent William. Horses are ready, and all is birthday. Bradshaw† has shone, this auspicious morning, in a very fine speech of congratulation; but I foresee "His sun sets weeping in the lowly west"; that is, a fatal bowl of punch will, before night, quench this luminary of oratory.

Adieu, again and again, sweet boy; and if you acquire health and strength, every time I wish them to you, you will be a second Samson; and, what is more, will, I am sure, keep your hair.

Every good wish attends your kind fellow-traveller, and chum; nor will he be forgot in our flowing bowls to-day.

And then, mother-like, Lady Chatham adds the following lines in her own writing:

If more could be said expressive of feelings, my dearest dear boy, I would add a letter to this epistle; but as it is composed, I will only sign to its expressive contents, Your fond and loving mother

HESTER CHATHAM.

*James Charles was the youngest of Chatham's sons. He became a naval officer and died in 1779.

†Thomas Bradshaw, M. P. for Saltash, was made a Lord of the Admiralty, and died in 1774. The reference here indicates the way in which Chatham used to discuss with his son the contemporary politicians.

That Chatham's spelling and grammar were frequently faulty is not to be computed against him; his was a generation when many gentlemen could not write a sound letter. But his trite hackneyed references and stereotyped phrases rather suggest the superficial than the true scholar. That he was not unacquainted with Latin, Greek and English classics, as well as with modern French, we are well aware, but we have to wait nearly another thirty years before we get an illuminating remark on his attitude toward learning. It is convenient here to mention that, in a letter to Lord Grenville, William Pitt was giving his views on the kind of education suitable for a man who meant to take up public life. Pitt said he believed in the study of classics—especially Greek, also mathematics, philosophy, ethics, public law and treaties, history and memoirs, "and what (for want of any other terms) I am afraid I must be contented to call *statistics*. By the latter I mean of course Adam Smith, and a very little besides." Pitt added significantly, "and I know, too, that my father would not have omitted any one of them."

Chatham's letter of October ninth, which crossed his son's, had evidently reached Cambridge by October fifteenth, for on that date the undergraduate replied and referred to that "*manly* virtue and *useful knowledge,* that I may be, on some future day, worthy to follow, *in part,* the glorious example always before my eyes." It is evidence of Chatham's mind for detail that he had requested of that small, short-sighted Master of Pembroke, the Reverend Doctor James Brown, that each of Pitt's two tutors should devote an hour a day to William. On the authority of one of the latter tutors—by name Pretyman and to be mentioned presently—the youngster's knowledge was already "very considerable," while "his

proficiency in the learned languages was probably greater than ever was acquired by any other person in such early youth. In Latin authors he seldom met with any difficulty; and it was no uncommon thing for him to read into English six or seven pages of Thucydides, which he had not previously seen, without more than two or three mistakes, and sometimes without even one."

It was Chatham's particular wish that his son read Thucydides and Polybius, but it was not long before William had a breakdown. Whether it was wise to send at such an early age one so delicate to begin a life of study is open to question. He was growing too quickly and taxing his brain at the same time. The result was that this first autumn he became so seriously ill that when convalescent he took four days in which to reach London. "A speedy recovery to perfect health we are not allowed to expect," wrote Chatham on November 3, 1773, to the Earl of Shelburne from Burton Pynsent, "But our worthy Dr. Addington has filled us with comfort, by assuring us our dear boy is in a perfect good way, and that his future health may be benefited by this effort of nature."

But unfortunately, as part of his prescribed treatment, Doctor Addington filled William with too much port wine. It was an age when port was looked upon as the best hope for the physically weak. Doubtless this, but also the open-air exercise, the keeping of early hours and strict regard to diet, did help to make William stronger. For six months Pitt was kept at home, and the improvement was noticeable. What was not obvious was the injury done to the stomach by too much alcohol. Addington was sowing the seeds of future trouble. It is a fair statement that in an era of heavy-drinkers and three-bottle men Pitt was seen in the House of Com-

mons intoxicated only once. But that Addington had got him into a bad habit during these six months can not be doubted. Pitt had this one weakness: that he drank more than was good for his stomach, and eventually it killed him. The distinguished physician, Sir Walter Farquhar, who looked after Pitt from 1795 till he died, has left it on record that "the early habit of the too free use of wine operated unquestionably to weaken the powers of the stomach."

"All you want at present," Chatham had written to William just before the end of October, 1773, "is quiet." He cautioned him against "pursuing too much all those liberal and praiseworthy things." Even in the few weeks of this his first term the boy had made an excellent impression. Thus the Master of Pembroke in writing on November twenty-sixth to inform Chatham that William was getting better, added that "notwithstanding his illness, I have myself seen, and have heard enough from his tutors, to be convinced both of his extraordinary genius and most amiable disposition," and how he listens "with the greatest attention to those who are most anxious for his welfare."

Wilson again accompanied Pitt when he returned to Cambridge, and there is a letter from Pembroke Hall, dated July 15, 1774, wherein the fifteen-year-old informs his father that "College life hitherto agrees exceedingly well, and pleases in the same degree. . . . with regard to tutors, I think it is settled very well, as either Mr. Turner or Mr. Pretyman will be here constantly through the summer. . . . I have as yet made no new coffee-house acquaintances. . . . I have this morning, for the first time, mounted my horse, and was accompanied by Mr. Wilson. . . . Here the dinner-bell brings this scrawl to a conclusion."

This friendship beginning with George Pretyman was to last till the soul of William Pitt left its body. Pretyman was now twenty-three and had brought distinction to Pembroke Hall by becoming Senior Wrangler and Smith's prize man two years ago. Coming of an old East Anglian family, Pretyman like Pitt was extraordinarily lucky in finding the right opportunities for his talents. There is no question but that these two fine minds were entirely suited for each other, and were through life of considerable assistance the one to the other. As Pitt rose to power and distinction, so did Pretyman; but it was on the latter's high intellectual ability that Pitt was glad sometimes to rely. Thus, this meeting of tutor and pupil was most fortunate.

Two days after the above letter Chatham writes from Hayes warning William not to sit up late in his studying, and the boy replies that he is studying Thucydides, Quintilian and philosophy, is keeping early hours and goes out riding with Mr. Wilson. On the last day of August he again writes to his father that "the academical life is extremely conducive both to health and pleasure." He is reading with Pretyman, and he has been reading Cicero's *De Senectute* with the Master of Pembroke. William's life, in fact, at Cambridge consisted chiefly of riding, studying, inspecting newspapers, attending chapel once every morning and evening, dining usually in hall, and never spending an evening out of college.

So the good work that was to fit him for his public life went on, but under a very strict and circumscribed tutelage. He was the son of the nation's greatest political personality, he must therefore be given every attention and respect. There was neither the opportunity for the youth to sow his wild oats, nor were there any wild oats to sow. For let it be said at once that in a genera-

tion when most young men were supposed to be rakes, Pitt like his father stands out untouched by vice, yet with a proud consciousness of pure intention which so puzzled and annoyed people that even in later years he bore the nickname of the "immaculate boy." Chatham too well knew the notorious immorality, the blatant profligacy, the gambling and heavy drinking that went on, and was resolved that his clever son should not be contaminated. Thus he continued to send to "my sweetest boy" letters ponderous with classical allusions, while permitting him an education less pertaining to a university than a seminary.

Toward the end of his undergraduate days William expressed his ambition as that of at least never injuring the glories attached by his father to the name of Pitt. There were occasions, too, when the son would travel up from Cambridge to Westminster to hear his father make some momentous speech in the House of Lords. One of these occurred in January of 1775, when Chatham demanded that British troops should be withdrawn from Boston, and Benjamin Franklin was present as a privileged stranger in the House of Lords. Next morning William wrote his mother an account of the memorable incident. "My father is now getting up, and has had, I am told, a good night." As to Chatham's speech, the son considers "it was everything that was superior" and the place was "crowded with Americans." Later in this epistle William adds that "my father has slept well. . . . He has had no pain, but is lame in one ankle near the instep, from standing so long. No wonder he is lame: his first speech lasted above an hour, and the second half an hour—surely, the two finest speeches that were ever made before, unless by himself! He will be with you to dinner by four o'clock."

William's career had so far been strangely uninfluenced by competition. By the privilege of being a peer's son he was allowed to take his degree without examination in 1776, being now only seventeen. But he still continued at Cambridge, studying hard at classics and mathematics under Pretyman's guidance. It was a splendid mental training for one who aimed to become a great speaker, a distinguished statesman. In this way he read most of the eminent Greek and Latin authors, learning to construe with readiness, paying particular attention to Livy, Sallust and of course his Thucydides. French was not neglected, but he was reading such books as John Locke's *Essay concerning Humane Understanding,* and Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations.* The latter had just been published and sprang into immediate popularity. Pitt accepted the economist's principles with eagerness, so that during this post-graduate study he was quietly assimilating those ideas of commercial science, corn laws and the rest which were eventually to bring about legislative reforms.

So, while this brilliant young graduate attended lectures on civil law and applied himself to acquiring perfect expression, he began to come out of his shell and fraternize. We see him at this stage witty and unassuming, full of the zest for knowledge and fitting himself for the career of a barrister, yet with the ambition that politics may claim him. The one was to be his livelihood; the other his vocation.

Every successful man of affairs is willing to admit that he has achieved by two means: a clear realization of what he set forth to obtain, and a steady concentration on that aim. In some marvelous manner events shape themselves and fit neatly into his intended scheme. So it was with William Pitt. His mind was set on winning

through by that method which expresses itself in oratory. He concentrated the whole of his youth to that end, and excluded all which had no bearing on this project. Thus, indeed, partly from filial devotion but also because of its professional value, we find him again coming up from Cambridge to hear that historic speech which his father delivered in the House of Lords on May 30, 1777, when the feeble crutched figure moved the address to the Crown for the stoppage of hostilities in America.

It was an impressive occasion as William, just two days past his eighteenth birthday, heard his father thundering forth, "You may ravage—you can not conquer. It is impossible. You can not conquer the Americans." The young man listened and waited, but (he said) the House "did not rise till near ten, and then I went in quest of a dinner." Next morning from the hotel in King Street, where he used to stay, he wrote to tell his mother all about Chatham's pathetic attempt to win over the peers. "His first speech took up half an hour, and was full of all his usual force and vivacity. I only regretted that he did not always raise his voice enough for all the House to hear every thing he said." But back to Pembroke Hall William traveled "happy beyond measure in the excursion I had made." That same autumn his father seemed likely to last for a long time; for, from Hayes, Chatham wrote to tell that his health was mending and that he went home to dinner "where I eat like a farmer."

The winter passed. William was busy with his Aristotle, Homer, Xenophon, Thucydides and Adam Smith. And then came that final and tragic appearance of his father on April seventh of the next year. Could anything remain so indelibly fixed in Pitt's memory as the day when he had helped his father into the House,

watched, listened, and then witnessed the dramatic collapse? It was, so to speak, the last lesson in William's training for a career of public speaking. All that he had learned from books was now crowned by that last gesture of the greatest contemporary orator. So neatly had events shaped themselves that the elder Pitt had not passed away before the younger Pitt had learned his art.

The impressive pomp of the Westminster Abbey funeral, the responsibility which devolved on the nineteen-year-old son in the absence of his elder brother away on military service, the immediate future outlook, could not fail to intensify the seriousness of an already soberly constituted student. Soon after the funeral William, his mother and his sister Harriet went down to Burton Pynsent for the summer and in October William went back to Cambridge. But economy was now essential, his father had died deep in debt. On the last day of November William wrote to Lady Chatham asking for fifty pounds "for the current expenses of the quarter," and now he must turn his attention more definitely to being called to the Bar, for when he should come of age there would not be more than three hundred pounds a year accruing to him.

William required money also for purchasing chambers in the Temple, where he could begin keeping his terms and paying visits from there to hear parliamentary debates. His uncle, Earl Temple, who had financed Chatham, therefore advanced the requisite sum. Meanwhile Pitt used to stay at the hotel in King Street, whence he would ride down on his horse to see his mother at Hayes. Occasionally he would visit the Opera, but invitations to balls left him cold. His interest in politics was becoming keener than ever. By June, 1779, he was back at Pembroke Hall, and in the next month he was

definitely hoping that "the University may furnish me with a seat in Parliament possibly at the General Election. It is the seat of all others the most desirable, as being free from expense, perfectly independent, and I think in every respect extremely honourable."

Now, for the first time, we see young Pitt canvassing for votes. When an undergraduate, he had been friendly at Cambridge with the Marquis of Granby, who presently succeeded to the family title and estates as Duke of Rutland. The Duke wrote to such influential people as Dr. E. Barnard, Provost of Eton, on behalf of the candidate, and the Provost acknowledged Pitt's strong claims. On August 14, 1779, Pitt wrote from Pembroke Hall thanking the Duke, and on October eighteenth expressed the belief that "my cause is very promising."

Pitt owed a great deal to Rutland for the trouble he took in getting a suitable opening. It is necessary here to introduce the name of Sir James Lowther (1736-1802), who had in 1751 succeeded to a baronetcy, considerable wealth and great political influence, especially in the counties of Cumberland and Westmoreland. He was one of those unprincipled men who were treated with no little respect because he could be both dangerous as an enemy and extremely useful as a friend; one who would as soon fight a duel in Hyde Park as engage in shameless political trickery. He had been a member of the House of Commons ever since 1774; his delight in electioneering and his ability to command several seats were notorious. In short he was the kind of person who might be asked to give a political aspirant a chance to enter Parliament. Thus on July 27, 1779, the Duke of Rutland approached him by means of the following letter.*

* "The MSS. of the Earl of Lonsdale." Hist. MSS. Comn. London, 1893.

Lord Chatham's son, Mr. Pitt, a particular of [sic] friend of mine, having declared himself a candidate for the University of Cambridge, I cannot forbear at his desire, from requesting your interest in his behalf . . . and I trust that Mr. Pitt's principles founded on those by which his father so long upheld this country will give force to this application.

Perhaps no other youth, just turned twenty, would have had the assurance, the enterprise, the courage and —shall we admit it?—the impertinence to seek the suffrages of scholars, of learned dons, and aged members of this ancient university. It was ambition which would have seemed unreasonable but for the fact that Chatham's fame was still respected as one remembers a man who was the best friend in a nation's trouble. Meanwhile his financial backer and uncle, Lord Temple, died in September, 1779, and Pitt was flitting about visiting his grief-stricken mother at Burton Pynsent, returning to Cambridge to press his claims as parliamentary candidate, and then resuming his law studies in London.

But the times were anxious. Every one remembers the historical fact that in 1588 the Spanish Armada sailed up the English Channel, but not every one to-day appreciates that other historic danger when the Franco-Spanish fleet sailed unchallenged up this water. On the sixteenth of August, 1779, the combined enemy fleet was actually (as Comte d'Orvilliers in command of the Revolutionary squadron reported to the French Minister) "at this moment becalmed and anchored in sight of the Tower at Plymouth." They were "to become masters of the Channel . . . in order to bring about the passage of the land army." And it was the comparatively short distance between Plymouth in Devon and Burton Pynsent in Somerset, which caused Pitt anxiety for his mother's safety.

Thus, from even a purely personal point of view and a filial feeling, there was driven deep into the young man's mind that serious foreign danger of invasion which vanished only a few weeks before Pitt finally died.

In January, 1780, this ambitious youth was still looking slender, thin and lanky, but on the advice of Doctor Addington he was drinking asses' milk, taking plenty of horse exercises and getting a little stouter. He was keyed up with regard to the future, and the Duke of Rutland was still very much his friend. How altered have England's social customs become in a hundred and twenty years even in the Manners family! There still exists an account of the expenses when the Duke's birthday was (on January 4, 1779) celebrated at Haddon Hall in the most lavish manner. Special fireplaces and coppers were set up for cooking. The Hall itself was made more wonderful than ever; four oxen, sixteen sheep were roasted, and distributed to the populace together with forty hogsheads of ale. What with the glasses, plates, mugs, punch bowls and ladles, pewter spoons, lemons, confectionery, currants, raisins, butter and eggs, biscuit, cream, oatmeal, flour, the candles, ironmongery, the wine and spirits (for the gentlemen's table), the wages of waiters, porters, turn-spits, tapster, it was such an occasion that only eighteenth-century vigor could do it justice. There was a band which came from the Sheffield Volunteer Corps to play the music. Sixteen were the contingent, and they were three days away from home. Then the Bakewell bell-ringers helped with their chimes, and the whole entertainment of gentlemen, ladies, tenants and public, finishing up with a ball in the evening, cost the Duke the grand total of six hundred and eighteen pounds, twelve shillings, sixpence and three farthings. This was the roisterous kind of life at the back of the

national anxiety. "All who wished to be drunk, were so," wrote one who was present at this Haddon Hall fête, "which comprised a considerable number, and I do not hear of the least accident having happened, saving a few bruises from boxing, with the loss of hats and shoes."

Chapter VI

PARLIAMENT

"There are rumours," wrote Pitt in March, 1780, "of Parliament being to be dissolved soon after Easter, which oblige me to work double tides in the business of canvassing." In June he saw Lincoln's Inn surrounded by flames on all sides; it was the occasion of an anti-Popish riot, such an uprising in fact as London had not seen since Jack Cade and his Hayes companions had made themselves felt over three centuries before. Thus, here again, was a foretaste of that Roman Catholic controversy which was to concern Pitt so intimately as a statesman.

But this summer he became a barrister, with his chambers in New Buildings, Lincoln's Inn, and he joined the Western Circuit. From that ancient Dorset town of Dorchester, through which so many of his ancestors had been wont to pass, we find Pitt writing to tell his mother he had arrived there safely "and taken upon me the character of a lawyer." On the first of September Parliament was dissolved, so he hurried off to Cambridge for the election. The result, however, was devastating to his ambition. Not all the influence of his family name or of Rutland could avail him. Pitt had failed; his name was at the bottom of the poll. His University preferred an older man.

It seemed, he appreciated, as if the law "will now be probably the sole object with me"; but, actually, this was just that narrow valley of disappointment which even a Pitt must penetrate before reaching the slopes of success. Through the good offices of the Duke of Rutland, Sir James Lowther that same winter managed to

obtain for the young man the borough of Appleby.* It was, of course, pure jobbery; an instance of the need for those reforms which Pitt presently inaugurated. But on January 23, 1781, as representative for this north country division, we find Pitt, without having even had to visit his constituents, taking his place in the House of Commons. The date is notable, for on this day that began his great public life, his physical life departed a quarter of a century later.

At the age of twenty, then, here is the frail beardless youth numbered among the rulers of England. For himself there is no feeling of awkward bashfulness; he is within a building that he has entered many a time. He is as keen and as well-informed as any of the politicians around him; he is the superior of most morally, intellectually, rhetorically. Only in respect of youth and experience is he inferior to any, but the mere effusion of time will remedy that. All his life he has been familiar with the traditions, the etiquette, the mannerisms of the House of Commons; in no building whatsoever, among no body of men could he feel so perfectly at home. There would be no suffering from stage fright, for he was the son of a consummate actor and had been taught how to revel in publicity. There could be no awkward reluctance to speak, for the great actor had trained him from earliest

* The two following letters (from the "MSS of the Earl of Lonsdale") indicate how the Duke brought about a personal introduction which was to start Pitt on his great career: both epistles were written from Arlington Street, London. The first is dated November 27, 1780.

The Duke of Rutland presents his compliments to Sir James Lowther, and if he will give him leave, he will introduce Mr. Pitt to him tomorrow morning at any hour which may suit his convenience.

The second is dated three days later:

The Duke of Rutland presents his compliments to Sir James Lowther. He will be very happy to have the honor of seeing him in Arlington Street, and will take care that Mr. Pitt shall meet him.

years how to think standing on his feet, and how to declaim in the best classical fashion. So, at last, William Pitt had arrived exactly where it had been intended he should come; nor had he wasted one single hour in dallying on the journey. Even the brief period of a practising barrister was invaluable as having increased his confidence.

We can visualize this reserved, self-contained young man with his "d——d long obstinate face" (as one of his contemporaries, George III, related), the tall figure, the fine forehead, the keen eye, the conspicuous nose. It was Daniel Pulteney who six years later remarked in a letter that Pitt was "obliged to draw in his long legs, when any one passes, that commonly reach from the Treasury Bench to the table." That clear direct look, as straight as a spear and as hard as steel, that typical Pitt forbidding manner which kept all but the very few from intruding into his friendships, that natural dignity and easy assumption of superiority which instantly demanded for him attention, that biting wit and unflinching courage which were manifest immediately he warmed up to his subject; these were now to become for a quarter of a century as real features in the House of Commons as were the floor and walls and roof.

He found himself one of a stolid crowd. This assembly of purple-nosed *bon-viveurs,* with their knee breeches and glittering shoe-buckles, their stolid outward respectability was, far more then than ever it could be said concerning their successors to-day, the finest club in the world. The Speaker presided over a collection of somewhat unemotional men who worshipped convention, whose religion was summed up in that one sentence: "God defend our persons, our property, and our country." There were some who would even add to this the word

party. Gamblers all, who spent most of their time outside the House in quarreling, smoking, hunting, drinking, overeating, dueling, taking the waters at Bath, attending levees in London or looking after their estates in the country, they were dangerous gossips and schemers. Philanthropy had not yet moved them, but the age of social reforms was near at hand. The population of England and Wales at this time numbered about seven million eight hundred thousand. George III was by a personal rule actually governing the country, which was passing through a period of scarcely endurable debt and taxation. It needed some one in the House of Commons whose firm faith in her freedom and destiny could steer her through dangers and difficulties that seemed scattered around on all sides.

Britain was occupied with political disputes and dissensions. The great American complex had been handed down by Chatham unsolved. France, Spain and Holland were keeping the British nation in a state of isolation and nervousness. Exhausted by war, her prestige lowered, there was both the need and opportunity of a second Pitt to raise the country to that eminence where Chatham had previously placed her. And for this task a young man with commanding personality, perfect political rectitude, bold patriotism and practised oratory, was called forth. The fact is that a great national legacy had been dissipated, and in no respect was this more blatant than in regard to the British Navy. While Ministers were concerning themselves with home affairs and political animosities; while admirals and lesser officers afloat were too occupied with claret, burgundy, champagne, wasting their energies in profligate, rapacious, despotic, bullying and factious lives, nothing was being done for the men, so that in spite of the offer of bounty

and prize money, sailors were deserting from the Navy at the rate of about ten thousand a year when Pitt first became a Member of Parliament.

We shall not forget, either, that the young strivings for economical and parliamentary reform had begun to show themselves both within and outside the House. But what such men as Burke, Chatham, Wilkes and the Duke of Richmond had failed to effect, lesser people could not bring about. The measures suggested for the relief of Roman Catholics were equally doomed, yet all these new strivings were part of that great liberty, or revolutionary movement, which gives character to the eighteenth century in its closing years.

One of William Pitt's contemporaries not inaccurately summed up the former's life in five words: *"Non sibi, sed Patriae vixit."* And the very first public utterance indicated that he was about to inaugurate a career of stringent patriotism. We come, then, to the twenty-sixth of February, 1781, that memorable occasion when Pitt was to make his maiden speech. Lord North, First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer, had been Prime Minister ever since 1770. On the other side were those doughty opponents, Edmund Burke and Charles James Fox. Burke was just thirty years older than Pitt. His sane sound opinions in regard to the American colonies and the disastrous policy of Lord North, his plans for economical reform to check administrative extravagance and corrupt influences, were typical of his Irish ardor.

It was in support of Burke's bill for economical reform that Pitt now rose to speak, and every eye was turned to see the great Chatham's boy say what he would.

With an easy and elegant manner, in a voice rich and

harmonious, with language beautiful and luxuriant, he began by giving his hearty approval of retrenchment.

His Majesty's Ministers [he went on] ought to have come forward and proposed a reduction in the civil list, to give the people the consolation of knowing that their Sovereign participated in the sufferings of the Empire, and presented an honourable example of retrenchment in an hour of general difficulty. They ought to have consulted the glory of their royal master, and have seated him in the hearts of his people, by abating from magnificence what was due to necessity. Instead of waiting for the slow request of a burthened people, they should have courted popularity by a voluntary surrender of useless revenue.

This was the boy's first speech, but immediately it won the praise of North, of Burke and Fox alike. A new Pitt had come to light; a new force had arrived in the House of Commons suggestive of that power which the other Pitt had introduced. Just as Governor Pitt had been sent in 1698 to restore order and correct abuses in disorganized Madras, so with the same energy and ability his descendant now began the much greater task of reorganizing and reforming Britain. William's patron, the Duke of Rutland, sent him a warm letter of congratulations, to which the young Parliamentarian replied in such a manner that quite obviously this first success had not aroused too much self-pride. "The favourable idea you have received of my first attempt," Pitt writes modestly, "I must attribute to a partial reporter, and, what is yet more, a willing hearer."

This letter was written on Friday, March ninth,* and

* On March 2, 1781, the Duke of Rutland wrote from Belvoir Castle to Sir James Lowther as follows:

I must take the liberty of congratulating you on the success of Mr.

on the following Wednesday Pitt left London to join the western circuit again, for he was still pursuing his work as a barrister. But such had been his reception by that speech in the House of Commons that his future was clearly demonstrated: it must be politics and not the law. If Britain had (as every one else gloomily indicated) already passed her zenith, if she had lost her American colonies, while in Asia native princes had made successful inroads on her provinces, and such persons at home as Lord George Gordon were exciting the populace against domestic peace, then here was work to be done by the youngest representative of the Pitt family. The inscription on Chatham's monument in Westminster Abbey, that during his administration "Divine Providence exalted Great Britain to an height of prosperity and glory unknown to any former age" now seemed either a mockery, or an incitement to restore the country to its former glory. Most fitting, therefore, was it that the young Pitt had now arrived.

Pitt's first appearance in the House of Commons. The satisfaction I have felt in his having fulfilled all the encomiums made of him is very great, and I trust, Sir, yours will not be less in the thoughts of having placed him in that situation where his abilities may operate with utility to his country.—"The MSS of the Earl of Lonsdale." Hist. MSS. Comn. London, 1893.

It is not without interest to observe how Pitt's first speech affected that famous wit, George Augustus Selwyn (1719-1791), who was then sitting in the House of Commons as member for Gloucester. This gossip and gouty clubman, who once had been compelled to leave Oxford for an abominable act of blasphemy, wrote to Lord Carlisle on the day after hearing Pitt:

This young man, Mr. Pitt, gained an universal applause. I heard Lord N[orth] say it was the best first speech of a young man that he had ever heard. It was a very crowded house.—"The MSS of the Earl of Carlisle preserved at Castle Howard." Hist. MSS. Comn. London, 1897.

The same correspondent wrote to Carlisle on June 1, 1781.

"Young Pitt made yesterday on the Accounts another speech, which is much admired, in which there was *du sel, et du piquant, à pleines mains.*"

It would not be inaccurate to divide the latter's life into three divisions. First, comes the preparation for Parliament; next the brief preparation for premiership; and then the actual service in the capacity of Prime Minister. Of the forty-seven years in which he was alive, about one-half were spent in perfecting himself for that great task. It is interesting to look back on the prophecies which had been made concerning him, and to note the steady predestined progress of this exceptional man toward his aim. When Henry Bilson-Legge heard of the engagement of Lady Hester Grenville to the future Chatham, the former wrote to John Pitt and foretold that the offspring from such a union would be orators —"can't fail to speak as soon as they are born" was how he expressed it. William's tutor, Wilson, had regarded the boy as a "prodigy," and remarked: "He will be fully qualified for a wrangler *before* he *goes* [to Cambridge], and be an accomplish'd classik, mathematician, historian and poet."

One may regret that the combination of ill-health and the privilege of being a peer's son prevented his competing in public examination at his university. It would have been more than ordinarily interesting to have noted the results. On the other hand, it would scarcely have concerned Pitt himself to have attained high academic distinctions. He was a politician from boyhood and little else. On entering Parliament he had joined the Earl of Shelburne's party because the latter had been a follower of Chatham. Although he was left the sum of three thousand pounds by the Duke of Rutland, and possessed the small income already mentioned, Pitt was never well enough off to feel financially independent. There can be little doubt that had he confined himself to the Bar for a number of years, he would have earned

both fame and fortune; but there can be few more convincing proofs of a man's sincerity and fidelity to his own conscience than when he deliberately chooses to neglect the more remunerative career for one that will leave him thousands of pounds in debt.

Pitt was so far to enfold himself in his political work that—to the amusement of his relatives—he would even forget his own birthday. He possessed also that wonderful and invaluable power of disciplined concentration which enables a man to lay aside any immediate trouble (however weighty) and keep his mind fixed undisturbed on the main object. I remember one of Gladstone's relatives many years ago telling me how the Hawarden hewer of trees owned this same faculty. The disappointment of being defeated in a General Election was not so great as to prevent his falling sound asleep half an hour later. The tragic death of an old friend within his presence could not ruffle his composure. It is that same self-composure which during a great war enables admirals and generals to carry on with the main strategy and refuse to be led away by minor tactical defeats.

There are those who have regarded Pitt as one scarcely human, and devoid of either heart or humor. They say that he never was a boy and never a young man, that he was always a middle-aged being. This mental picture is not in accord with actual facts. Like many really brilliant men, he was full of vivacious fun. He was fond of country sports and took a personal interest in his village. "I hope you read with pleasure how our long-formed *cricketters* beat Hampshire out and out," wrote Lady Chatham to him from Hayes in August, 1774. Apart from his horse-riding, he delighted in partridge-shooting, and now that he was settled in town, he frequented that exclusive Goostree Club whose twenty-

five members included some of the gayest young sparks in London. Here he supped and for a while took part in gambling till he had the sense to realize that the latter must be given up. For nothing within his range should ever prevent him from carrying on the work of his father even in the highest possible office available.

Pitt's second speech in the House of Commons was on May 31, 1781. It was again surprising because of its maturity. He spoke with the assurance and the clear reasoning not of one who only three days ago had passed his twenty-second birthday, but of the long-experienced parliamentary veteran. Some present might have looked on these first two efforts as the flashes of Pitt genius. That they were also the steady outcome from a mind brimming over with its political contents his brother members were now to learn. On June 12, 1781, Pitt was to prove that he was going on with his new job. He rose to speak in support of Fox's motion for peace with the American colonies; it was a perfect opportunity for a Pitt. He began by saying he was induced to rise owing to certain expressions that had been made respecting the ministerial and legislative conduct of "a dear and most respected relation," with regard to the American War. The reference, of course, was to Chatham, and Pitt thought it incumbent to state his relation's opinions, who had "most heartily reprobated the American War in all its parts, as well on the principle on which it was taken up, as its progress, and the ultimate objects to which it pointed."

With delightful assuredness, this sapling of a politician now bent with dignity to deliver a blow. He referred to Lord Westcote having in his zeal called the American War a Holy War. All the Pitt that was ever in Chatham was roused in the person of his son. "For my part," insisted the young speaker, "I am persuaded,

and will affirm, that it is a most accursed, barbarous, cruel, unnatural, unjust, and diabolical war! It was conceived in injustice; it was nurtured and brought forth in folly; its footsteps were marked with blood, slaughter, persecution and devastation; in truth, every thing which went to constitute moral depravity and human turpitude were to be found in it." As to England herself, he proceeded, "The nation was drained of its best blood, and of its vital resource of men and money. The expense of it was enormous, much beyond any former experience; and yet, what had the British nation received in return? Nothing but a series of ineffective victories, or severe defeats."

On the twenty-eighth of September Yorktown was invested; on October nineteenth, with no serviceable guns, but troops shattered by wounds or ruined by sickness, it was compelled to surrender, two thousand of the seven thousand six hundred who gave themselves up being hospital cases. With this disaster the military operations were virtually ended. The initiative had passed from the hands of the British Commander-in-Chief. It remained for the British Navy to do what they could; but Chatham's forecast had proved literally accurate. "You may ravage; you can not conquer. It is impossible. You can not conquer the Americans. I might as well talk of driving them before me with this crutch."

So on November 28, 1781, Pitt got up to make his fourth speech when his countrymen were smarting at the terrible news concerning Yorktown. He desired "to give vent to those sentiments of indignation, which, in the present disastrous situation of our affairs, I find it impossible for me to suppress. The duty which I owe to my sovereign and my country will not permit me to remain in silence . . . Is the American War to have no end? . . . Is there any rational object in pursuit? Certainly there is

none." Here was the true son of his father, with the same passionate ardor and the same fighting spirit on behalf of American peace. In spite of his youth, there was no mistaking the logic and earnestness of his matter. On resuming his seat, he was received with loud applause.

Lord North—that courageous, cool, cynical, good-natured, resourceful Premier—would gladly have made peace; but George III clung to war as a litigant will fight for the possession of real estate. Never was a more proprietorial monarch since the time when the Stuarts looked upon the territories of Virginia and New England as potential gold-mines. George's avariciousness and self-centeredness were unusual even in an age that had standardized these vices pretty generally. But he was also as astute as a Mussolini, and so able a political strategist that even Pitt was eventually to find himself equally matched.

In the next February, following a siege lasting nearly six months, Minorca's garrison after an almost unrivaled bravery had been compelled to surrender. Six hundred emaciated British soldiers, wan and worn, followed by a hundred and twenty artillerymen and two hundred seamen passed down between the lane formed by the armies of Spain and France. It was the weakness of the British Navy which had prevented relief being sent to the island. But the news of this loss had its repercussion in England quickly. Lord North resigned, a new administration was formed in March composed of the two chief Whig parties. The Marquis of Rockingham, who had vigorously opposed North's policy, now became Premier, with the Earl of Shelburne and the Honorable Charles James Fox, Lord Holland's son, as the two Principal Secretaries of State. Edmund Burke came too, and Richard Brinsley Sheridan, the witty Irish dramatist who had made hand-

some profits out of *The School for Scandal.* He had been intimate with the Whig leaders for some time, and after Fox's persuasion had first entered Parliament in 1780 as member for Stafford.

Now Pitt by his four speeches had already shown that such eloquence and personality would be valuable to either political party. Thus it was that Rockingham now invited him to accept minor office but carrying with it the remuneration of five thousand pounds a year. The latter would have been extremely useful to Pitt, but the former did not appeal to him. Thus before he had reached his twenty-third birthday, Pitt, the incorruptible, the far-sighted, the young man of high ambition, had the experience of being offered and of refusing office. It was a daring but extremely prudent decision, for he saw, what was not obvious to all other minds, that this Administration was not sufficiently close-knit to avoid being split. He preserved a typical Pitt independence, but continued to show what a force he was in the House. What was even more, he was basically a reformer. And first there must be parliamentary reform.

On May 7, 1782, he brought forward a motion to this effect, and prefaced his speech by an apology "for undertaking a task so extensive, and which requires abilities and experience so much greater than mine; but having said this, I will trust to the indulgence of the House." And then he weighed in against the "corrupt influence," spoke of the "friends of freedom," "equal and fair system of representation." Our "beautiful frame of government" had departed; no longer was it representative, but defective, incomplete. "There are," he emphasized, "some boroughs absolutely governed by the treasury, and others totally possessed by them." Still, remembering what Old Sarum had meant to the family,

one can not avoid being amused at Pitt's reference to those boroughs having "one or other powerful man, who assumed or pretended to an hereditary property of what ought only to be the rights and privileges of the electors." In spite, however, of Pitt's reference to his father's opinion that the liberties of the nation were being corrupted, the motion was lost by one hundred and sixty-one votes to one hundred and forty-one.

We pass over a few weeks. Whig principles had triumphed to the extent that hostilities against America had been discontinued, though not against France, Spain and Holland. Pitt had risked his own future in declining office, but with that good luck which preceded him through life, there came now his chance again. On the first of July, 1782, the honest and high-minded, though not statesmanlike, Rockingham died. In the same month George III made Shelburne Prime Minister, and the latter took the bold initiative of making Pitt not merely Chancellor of the Exchequer but leader of the House of Commons. Thus while he was still amazingly young—twenty-three—the goal of his life had been reached. What is more, whereas many a man at twice his age would have thought this an occasion for unconditional gratitude, Pitt showed his independence by insisting that the peace preliminaries with the Americans must imply an irrevocable recognition of independence should the final treaty break down. Nowadays there is not an Englishman who would differ from Pitt in that respect. History exposes the folly of the past for the avoidance of future errors. And the notable fact is that it was not solely out of filial respect, but from his own clear thinking that Pitt took this strong line of action. He relied on no one but himself; his somewhat unapproachable exterior was the expression of his character which worked alone.

Fox and Burke resigned after Shelburne was made Premier, and the whole world received with amazement the news of Pitt's appointment. It was because of Pitt's name, his recently acquired fame, his obvious genius, his absolute integrity, his intrepid vigor that he was the most convenient candidate at hand. The choice justified itself, for neither the eloquence of Charles James Fox nor the rhetoric of Edmund Burke could overcome Pitt. He met their attacks by reasoned arguments, delivered with mildness, modesty and devoid of presumption. Thus, instead of having to wait weary years in the desert of disappointing suspense, Pitt was singularly fortunate in having been no sooner fully prepared than he found himself in a unique elevation. The more one considers his life as a whole, the more one perceives its extraordinary conciseness and economy of effort. Time is not permitted to be wasted. Positively there is no waiting. This is to be a short span of human existence, but it is to be so crammed with incident that the years must be packed with neat detail.

Not unnaturally his youth and rapid rise created both jealousy and ridicule. Pitt was not unconscious of this effect. When on the fifth of December, 1782, he addressed the House of Commons he remarked that there were several things unfortunate for him that day, but the calamity under which he chiefly labored was his youth, "a calamity which I can not sufficiently lament," since it had been made the subject of animadversion on the other side of the House. His youth, he allowed, was very exceptionable to that situation, yet he trusted that the system of his conduct and his strict discharge of the duties of his high office would in a great measure do away with the objection.

It was because of Pitt's refusal to betray Shelburne

that from February, 1783, political animosity began to exist between Pitt and Fox. But Pitt could be already extremely offensive by his superiority of manner, and there occurred an instance on the seventeenth of this same February. It was during the debate on the preliminary articles of peace with France and Spain, and the provisional treaty with America. Sheridan had spoken against the address, and now Pitt with doubtful taste and unnecessary severity remarked that no man more than himself admired the abilities of Sheridan; "the elegant sallies of his thought, the gay effusions of his fancy, his dramatic turns, and his epigrammatic points; and if they were reserved for the proper stage, they would no doubt receive, what the honourable gentleman's abilities always did receive, the plaudits of the audience."

But the insulted dramatist was equal to the task of smiting Pitt who had so imprudently uncovered his guard. Sheridan in reply questioned indeed "the propriety, the taste, the gentlemanly point" of the young statesman's attack, and added very wittily that "if ever I again engage in the compositions he alludes to, I may be tempted to an act of presumption—to attempt an improvement on one of Ben Jonson's best characters, the character of the Angry Boy in the *Alchemist*." This chastising of the "facetious boy" Chancellor was likely to have its good effect; but meanwhile the present Administration was tottering. On February twenty-third Shelburne resigned office, on the last day of March Pitt also gave up the seal of the Exchequer, separated himself from Shelburne or any political party, and once more asserted his independence.

Of this freedom he profitably availed himself now that a coalition Ministry was in power, with the Duke of Portland as nominal Premier, Fox and North being Sec-

retaries of State. Pitt, we must remember, was a more democratic edition of his father, and possessed of wider reading. Furthermore, his vision soared above petty party politics. As long as he pretended loyal attachment, he verily was true and despised duplicity. But, with the American colonies now definitely lost, he saw very clearly the need for reforming Parliament by three channels: (1) checking the outrageous bribery which went on at elections; (2) disfranchising corrupt constituencies; and (3) increasing the number of county members and representatives of the metropolis.

These resolutions he put before Parliament, and they were defeated by large majorities. That was inevitable, but he had well manifested the integrity of his aim. He was to pass now through another brief period of unsettlement, and it seemed as if in sacrificing everything to the dictates of conscience he had ruined his political career. In September he went for a six weeks' holiday to Rheims, Paris and Fontainebleau. His two companions were William Wilberforce and Edward Eliot. The former was to become the great English philanthropist on behalf of slaves. He had been born in the same year as Pitt, and had rivaled him to the extent of having entered Parliament when only twenty-one. He was not merely a close friend, but he was a fellow member of Goostree's. On one occasion Wilberforce won as much as six hundred pounds at this club for budding orators and statesmen. Like White's, it had been originally a coffee-house, and on its site was eventually to be raised the Marlborough Club. Eliot was another personal friend who was to marry Pitt's sister Harriet, some two years later.

Instead of the modern Pullman-train-turbine-steamer or airplane mode of travel, Pitt and his companions had to drive down to Dover, where they embarked in one of

those bluff-bowed heavy-sterned packet cutters which in due time sailed them across the strong tide-way of Dover Straits to Calais. Fortunately, from existing models and from one of Swaine's paintings we know exactly how one of these craft looked. They were very uncomfortable except in calm weather, and Pitt on arrival at Calais was considerate enough to write informing his mother at Burton Pynsent "that we arrived here after a rough but a very prosperous passage." On his return to England before the end of October he took up residence at his brother's house in Berkeley Square, with the intention of resuming his career as barrister.

But once again politics were to claim him and pin him down. And it is most intriguing to find how by the circle of events, India which had founded the Pitt fortunes, was now to become of primary interest in William Pitt's official life. Throughout this eighteenth century India became of the greatest importance to Britain with every succeeding year. It received, however, still further value when the American colonies disappeared from within the Empire. Those transatlantic importers had per man consumed over one pound of English goods: but now this was to be halved. While India was full of riches, and the East India Company had sent home in the Company's ships untold wealth, yet all was not well.

Actually this Company was ruling India, though its object was to make money. Corruption, oppression, famine followed. Finally, urged by Burke, Parliament had appointed a commission to inquire into affairs. Warren Hastings, the first Governor-General of the united provinces of Calcutta, Madras and Bombay, had been accused of high-handed proceedings in obtaining large sums of money for the Company. As a result of the unfavorable report which reproached the East India Com-

pany with mismanagement at home, and wanton abuse of military authority by their officials in India, Fox now brought forward his India Bill. The aim of this coalition move was to allow the commercial affairs still to be directed by the Company, but to place its political management in the hands of seven persons nominated by Parliament.

The critics at once realized how terribly dangerous would be this privilege of exercising East Indian patronage. It was, in effect, "to erect an influence above the Throne itself." Pitt was not the only one to oppose the bill, but it was passed by the House of Commons. Complications followed, for George III took the unconstitutional course of authorizing Pitt's cousin, Earl Temple, to state in the House of Lords that he would regard as an enemy any one who voted for the bill. By reason of this royal interference the House of Lords on December 17, 1783, threw the bill out; whereupon, that same day, the House of Commons carried a resolution that it was "a high crime and misdemeanor" to attempt influencing Parliament by the report of any private sentiments of the King.

This created the fullest opportunity for Pitt to express his hereditary vehemence and indignation. He was flatly opposed to the House of Commons' resolution. He referred to "the unalienable right of peers, either individually or collectively, to advise his Majesty, whenever they thought the situation of public affairs made such a step an essential part of their duty." None the less he failed by one hundred and fifty-three votes against eighty to win over the House; and then a dramatic, even drastic, incident followed.

At midnight of December 18-19 a special messenger delivered from the King to the two Secretaries of State

the intimation that his Majesty had no further occasion for their services. Parliament was dismissed, a new Ministry was formed, the King appointing Pitt as First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer. Thus, at the age of twenty-four, here was Pitt at last Prime Minister, with his friend the Duke of Rutland (for a time) Lord Privy Seal, and Earl Howe as First Lord of the Admiralty.

It was the determining crisis in the young man's life; there could be no forsaking of politics for the Bar in future. Events had marked him out for that immense task of reforming and reconstructing the country's fortunes. That he realized the gravity of his new responsibility, let us select one letter alone. He writes to Lord Sackville in the following terms:

1783. Dec. 29. Berkeley Square. In the arduous situation in which his Majesty has condescended to command my services at this important juncture, I am necessarily anxious to obtain the honor of a support and assistance so important as your Lordship's.*

In his anxiety to collect around him the best men, Pitt did not forget his old friend and tutor, Pretyman. The latter, who had been ordained, was collated in 1782 to the sinecure rectory of Curwen, Merionethshire. And now Pitt obtained his services as private secretary, which were to be continued until 1787, notwithstanding that George III gave him in 1785 a rectory. If, in those very unecclesiastical days the cleric was temporarily to assist the Premier by a brilliant mathematical mind, Pitt was to find this invaluable when it came to financial matters of state. The appointment to the Bishopric of

* "Report on the MSS of Mrs. Stopford-Sackville of Drayton House, Northamptonshire." Vol. I. Hist. MSS. Comn. London, 1904.

Lincoln in 1787 was Pretyman's reward for so many years of faithful friendship.

Pitt's loyalty toward those who rendered him any service was an outstanding characteristic; he sought to reward them at the first opportunity. Thus, to his good friend Rutland, Pitt wrote from Lord Chatham's house:

Berkeley Square
Tuesday, 11 o'clock.

My dear Duke,

In this decisive moment, for my own sake, and that of the country, I trust I may have recourse to your zeal and friendship. My hands are so full that I can not be sure of calling on you. Will you, if possible, come here at twelve. I am to see the King at one.

Ever most truly yours
W. Pitt.

And after being Lord Privy Seal, Rutland was to become Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. A fine old-fashioned English gentleman, who enjoyed the choicest wines, the the best vintages, and (as we know from contemporary letters) used to send his cooks abroad to learn fresh intricacies of their art, the Duke was one of the most confidential friends in Pitt's select inner circle.

Chapter VII

PITT'S FIRST MINISTRY

Pitt had begun to succeed not merely because he had luck, pluck and ability, but partly owing to astute organization and knowledge of his own worth. Not always did his speeches in the House impress every hearer as his maiden effort had appealed. For instance, Selwyn, that notorious devotee of wine, women, gambling and of such horrible sights as the executions of criminals, the wit, whom we mentioned in the last chapter, was not particularly moved by Pitt's effort on June 12, 1781. He wrote on June thirteenth to Lord Carlisle:

I heard yesterday young Pitt; I came down into the House to judge for myself. He is a young man who will undoubtedly make his way in the world by his abilities. But to give him credit for being very extraordinary, upon what I heard yesterday, would be absurd. If the oration had been pronounced equally well by a young man whose name was not of the same renown, and if the matter and expression had come without that prejudice, or wrote down, all of which could have been said was, that he was a sensible and promising young man. There is no fairer way of judging.*

Still, the young orator was going from strength toward perfection; and on November twenty-eighth Selwyn had to admit that, "Mr. Pitt's speech to-day has made a great noise." Similarly on the first of January, James Hare wrote to Lord Carlisle:

You have without doubt heard of the progress Pitt has made. He is wonderful in all respects, but in nothing so much as in the regular and rapid improvement he

* "The MSS of the Earl of Carlisle."

makes: I have heard him speak three times only, and each speech was better than the former. His language is extremely good, and always correct, and he has a fluency that never fails him; but it is really doing him an injustice to attempt to describe his excellence in such inadequate terms.*

His organization was being done outside the House in the select atmosphere of clubland. "Young Pitt," continued the gossipy Selwyn in February, 1782, "has formed a society of young Ministers, who are to fight under his banner, and these are the Duke of Rutland, Mr. Banks, Lord Chatham, etc., etc., and they assemble at Goostree's." But already the ambitious orator had let it be known that he believed in himself. "Young Pitt will not be subordinate; he is not so in his own society. He is at the head of a dozen young people, and it is a corps separate from that of Charles's [*i.e,* Charles James Fox]; so there is another premier at the starting post, who, as yet, has never been shaved." Fox, by the way, was only ten years Pitt's senior.

That Pitt was not the puritanical spoil-sport which some have tried to imagine him is immediately proved by a thumb-nail sketch which Selwyn makes on March twenty-first of this same year. "When I left the House," he records, "I left in one room a party of young men, who made me, from their life and spirits, wish for one night, to be twenty. There was a table full of them drinking—young Pitt, Lord Euston, Berkley, North, etc., etc., singing and laughing *à gorge déployée;* some of them sang very good catches; one Wilberforce, a M[ember] of P[arliament], sang the best." The sight of the future friend of slaves spending a roisterous time was worth noting!

* *Ibid.*

Pitt had already exhibited his independent attitude when, after Shelburne's resignation the King had offered the young man premiership in the spring of 1783, and this office had been declined. But now self-reliant, in the face of a large majority in the House of Commons who opposed him, he was to show whether he possessed the tactical ability requisite for the job. He brought to the task a wonderful memory, the power of arranging his facts in orderly style, a lucid mind, a majestic diction, unbending dignity, a commanding manner. Already he had shown himself to have the ruling faculty no less than that of a pleader.

It was on January 12, 1784, that the House assembled once more. After the members had taken their oaths and seats, Fox spoke but then came Pitt. His speech was clear-cut, and unequivocal. "It has pleased his Majesty to command my services, at a time, when, however I might feel myself unqualified for the high station of the Minister, I could not think myself justified in conscience to decline. The circumstances of the country are peculiar and distressing. . . . Our first duty is to frame a system for the government of India." He defended himself against the charge of intriguing with the King. "I came up no back stairs. When I was sent for by my sovereign to know whether I would accept of office, I necessarily went to the royal closet. I know of no secret influence, and my own integrity will be my guardian against that danger. The House may rest assured whenever I discover any, I will not stay a moment longer in office."

But a great struggle was proceeding. Fox and his friends were resolved to expel Pitt from office; and however much some members admired the young Premier's genius, there were others who ridiculed the idea of "a

kingdom trusted to a schoolboy's care." The voting had shown that by two hundred and thirty-two to one hundred and ninety-three Pitt was in a decided minority. Several resolutions were passed condemning as unconstitutional both the appointment and the continuance in office of Ministers who did not possess the confidence either of the House or the people. To this Pitt answered that he had taken upon himself the government of the country upon the single, plain, intelligible principle by which he desired to stand or fall, viz., to save the country from the India Bill, which threatened destruction to the nation's liberties.

There can be no doubt that the powerful monopoly of the East India Company needed a thorough overhaul. It had become too corpulent and lethargic. An unhealthy sloth had begun to sap its vitality and corrupt its very soul. All sorts of abuses and incidents of mis-management were occurring in every department; it cried aloud for another Pitt to reorganize it from top to bottom. In 1772 the directors, instead of being able to pay the British Government a stipulated sum of four hundred thousand pounds, had to ask the latter for a loan of one million pounds. That was why, after a series of intrigues and crime had been exposed, legislation had become necessary to reform the Company's affairs. India was so many thousand miles away from London that enormous tracts of land and immense wealth had been obtained by extortion from the natives. The Company's servants were able to return home with private fortunes while the Company itself was going to the dogs.

At the time of Pitt's first Ministry the Honorable East India Company (as they loved to be called, though strictly speaking the title "Honorable" never belonged to them) numbered a fleet of sixty-six ships at home and abroad.

Owing to the trickery and corrupt practises that were rife, these were costing far more than they ought. It was usual at this time to charter vessels from builders, and whenever one Indiaman had become worn out or condemned, the builders claimed the right to replace her, so that she was said to be "built upon the bottom" of the first. So this system of "hereditary bottoms" went on year after year, as a valuable monopoly within another monopoly. Competition was not allowed to enter.

Moreover the Company was paying as much as thirty-three pounds per ton for the hire, whereas the expert evidence of Sir Richard Hotham proved that twenty-one pounds was a fair price. Even the officers and men of the service were corrupt. The former were not above selling a ship's gun, and it was a regular habit for an East Indiaman on arriving in the Downs to be met by the Deal boatmen who purchased tea and silks without having to pay duty. It became a standardized trade, and very cleverly organized. For generations the Deal boatmen had been pirates and smugglers; to-day, with their little motor-boats, they are always alert, as salvors when fog sends a steamer on to the Goodwins. In Pitt's time they were of such a desperate character that the Customs officers preferred (unless supported by the military) to let them alone. But by fitting a cotton bag in the crown of his hat, such as a sou'wester, and by fastening round his body a false waistcoat, by fixing also a bustle and thigh pieces beneath his trousers, each boatman could land, without being detected, thirty pounds of tea at a time. Therefore, even a few boat-crews working in conjunction with the Indiaman's crews could evade the Customs by many pounds sterling. It was only when Pitt reduced the duties on various Indian products, including tea, that this illicit trade was considerably stopped. Mus-

lins, chinaware and diamonds were however still smuggled into the country.

It is typical of those tricky times that for many years the East India Company's vessels were all of the same size: four hundred and ninety-nine tons. The reason for this stereotype was that every ship of five hundred tons and over was compelled to carry a chaplain: so, to evade this expense, an arrangement was made to rate the vessels just below that tonnage.

When Pitt on January 16, 1784, introduced his East India Bill, the Company was sufficiently ripe for reform from top to bottom. But there were plenty of interested members in the House who for one reason or another would have nothing to do with this measure. It was rejected by two hundred and twenty-two votes to two hundred and fourteen, but even this proportion indicated that the opposition to Pitt was not quite so bitter as four days before. One of the opposition, General Conway, however had the temerity to charge Pitt with resisting by bribery the voice of the people's representatives. Now, if there was one accusation which could never with justification be laid against either Chatham or Pitt, this was it. Both were financially incorruptible; no one could buy them. They were each most negligent of their private affairs concerning money, each declined to accept recognized emoluments, each went to his death deep in debt.

Nothing could have been more foolishly suggested than General Conway's slander. But with biting sarcasm, for which he was so fitted, Pitt replied to this accusation thus: "I have not been long accustomed to the violence of this House, or to its harsh language; but I have been long enough accustomed to it to assure the House, that neither unsupported slander, nor intemperate invective shall discompose my mind."

The position which Pitt now occupied would have unnerved most young men of his age. He was almost isolated, yet compelled to bear the brunt of an angry and powerful majority who were demanding that Parliament should be dissolved. That Pitt should have stood firm, cool, defiantly holding the reins of government in his thin hands, enduring insult after insult, refusing ever to be intimidated, was an early proof of his courage and aloofness. When Mr. Coke moved that the present Ministers were an obstacle to the country's safety, Pitt caustically replied that: "The removal of Ministers lies with the Crown, and not with this House." On February eighteenth, Pitt informed the House that in spite of Mr. Coke's motion having been passed by two hundred and twenty-three votes to two hundred and four, the King had not complied with this resolution for removing the Ministers, nor had these Ministers resigned.

If we keep our eyes centered entirely on the House of Commons of this date, it would seem as if Pitt and his colleagues were hanging on by the slenderest threads, with only the backing of a forceful King. But we do well to remember that this unreformed House was not yet adequately representative of the people; it did not truly interpret the voice of merchants, shipowners, and that growing class of manufacturers, or of the middle classes. It was too much a mere extension of the coffee-houses and clubs, too much a clique, ever to be capable of reflecting current popular opinion. Outside the House, Pitt had already so sympathetic a following that it surprised even some of his own admirers.

The psychology of the average crowd in the street is such that, whatever may be a man's politics, when once that man has proved himself immaculate and disinterested in personal gain, they will support him so far as is pos-

sible. When Chatham, as Paymaster of the Forces, broke with precedent and refused to appropriate valuable perquisites, he won universal enthusiasm from the people; it was the most perfect and magnificent advertisement which any politician could ever desire. It was one of those simple elementary acts of conduct which the crowd could understand and praise.

So, too, for his son William there came a similar opportunity, and early in time. On the eleventh of January there had fallen vacant the Clerkship of the Pells, a pleasant sinecure for life, with three thousand pounds a year attached. It was in the gift of the Premier, and every one believed that Pitt would take it to himself. Nor would a voice in the country have been raised against such a proceeding. He was poor, he had increasing expenses, and this income would enable him to devote himself whole-heartedly to his great duties.

But the proud immaculate Pitt declined to touch it for his own use. And when this was noised abroad, the effect on the national crowd was remarkable; it won him forthwith that most valuable quality of confidence, without which no Premier can hope to make headway. In February the Corporation of London by a singular act expressed their undoubted belief in Chatham's son. On the twenty-eighth they passed a vote of thanks for his conduct, and presented to him the freedom of the city in a one hundred guinea gold box. Later in the day he was the guest at a banquet held in the hall of the Grocers' Company.

Now, after this was over and Pitt was driving back from the city to his brother's house in Berkeley Square, the coach containing himself, Lord Chatham, and his brother-in-law, Lord Mahon, was being dragged by some of the excited crowd up St. James's Street, past the coffee-

houses and clubs. There was a great deal of cheering and a certain amount of counter-feeling, so that when the vehicle was abreast of Brooks' a number of ruffians made an attack, flung open the door of the coach and tried to assault Pitt. This was an ugly incident; the coach was smashed, but Pitt and his companions managed to get out and enter White's.

Whether this onslaught had been arranged by the followers of Fox need not be discussed. But, partly because it was a highly regrettable and base action, partly because it savored of unfair play, partly also because it was a direct insult to the city fathers, the effect was to create such deep indignation as to win for the young Premier no little sympathy. Thus, when on the first of March, Fox in the House of Commons insisted that the present Administration "does not possess the confidence of the representatives of the people," he was imagining a vain thing. Pitt answered that there was no cause for the Ministry to retire; that the sentiments of the public were flattering to the Ministry. The vote was taken, Fox's majority had slumped: he could secure only two hundred and one against one hundred and eighty-nine. Even now there was a sufficient indication to dissolve Parliament, but the King declined to comply. A week later Fox's majority fell to one only; and next day the Mutiny Bill, which Fox's party had threatened not to pass, was now approved by the House without opposition. Pitt had, like the patient general who waits and endures and delays till the enemy has wasted his forces in fruitless attack, thus finally won. He had proved not merely his oratorical ability, but that other essential—the skill of a parliamentary tactician. But not even this must be stressed too much, for there had been other influences at work.

What, then, was the reason for this complete disappearance of opposition within two months? What was at the back of all this? That it was based on something deeper than mere sympathy for a clever young man we shall presently be aware.

The solution is to be found under two heads: first, Fox himself, and second, the weight of public opinion which the city of London had already expressed. Let us try to straighten out the former's conflicting character, for he was really two personalities contending against each other, rather than the one disciplined organism which was Pitt. The third son of the first Lord Holland was fundamentally the extreme development of one who worships liberty till it becomes libertinism. As a boy of fourteen he was a gambler, and the tables continued to fascinate him through manhood. His debts in a few years cost his father one hundred forty thousand pounds.

His greatest enemy was his own lack of self-control. Therefrom sprang an intemperate judgment, an illogical impulsiveness, a private life of dissipation, and a public life lacking in balance or proportion. He was the headstrong gambler bungling through life. Coarse of feature, heavy-nosed, thick-lipped, unwieldy and corpulent of body, slovenly of appearance, ungraceful of carriage, his personal habits detestable, there is nothing here to attract. On the other hand he shared with Pitt the intellect of a scholar, and a courageous independence even to offending his King mortally. The better side of his passion for liberty and freedom expressed itself on behalf of the American colonies, his anxiety for improving the lot of the Irish peasantry, for abolition of the slave trade, and for Roman Catholic emancipation. Even during the French Revolution he still stuck to his ideals of liberty. And withal he was sincere, without a trace of hypocrisy.

An intensely human being, devoted to children, he was the most brilliant debater the world has ever heard. Good-natured, attractive, retaining hosts of friends who well knew that he was a rake, Fox had beneath his wig a gigantic brain. The vehemence of his rhetoric was immense, but its uncontrolled extravagance reacted against him. Thus, contrasted with the cold, even repelling manner of Pitt, the tactics of Fox were lacking in that quietness and confidence which indicate strength. In a word, then, Fox had overdone his case and so won support for Pitt who had held on with restraint.

It is valuable, before we leave this brief outline of a brilliant man, to have the opinion as set down by one of his distinguished contemporaries. We have already made reference to that fifth (Frederick Howard) Earl of Carlisle, whose long span of seventy-seven years from 1748 covered considerable political activity including the offices of President of the Board of Trade and Viceroy of Ireland. The vast amount of correspondence which has survived shows how intimately he was in touch with men and affairs. In the year that Fox died, Carlisle in his own handwriting set down the following:

Character of Charles James Fox. No character I believe was ever more mistaken. He has been generally considered as a man devoted to desperate ambition: another Rienzi, capable of seizing on power by any means, even to the excitement of revolutionary commotion. In truth, ambition was not his ruling passion. Pleasure, in all its most extravagant gratifications, held a stronger dominion over him.*

As to the weight of popular opinion, we have here that extraordinarily interesting psychology of the crowd.

* "The MSS of the Earl of Carlisle."

One of the most distinguished literary and dramatic critics of our time (the late Mr. A. B. Walkley) pointed to the difference between the individual and that collection of individuals called an audience. The theater gallery may be full of men who beat their wives, yet it will hiss the bullying villain of a melodrama with indignant sincerity. In like manner the loose-living, corrupt, eighteenth-century English people collectively were now sick and tired of all the dishonesty, the bribery and political depravity which for so long had been winked at. A new spirit was yearning to break forth, but had been nervous of its own voice. Now the gallery was calling for complete change and reform. The old gang of actors had played themselves out; let a new lot, with Pitt playing lead, occupy the national theater. Make a clean sweep! Start afresh!

Or, to modify metaphor, let Chatham's son have a chance. Britain was in a state of debt, disaster and disharmony; she had sunk to the level of a second-rate power. If there was anything in heredity, then the disdainful, distant, young Cambridge graduate might restore her to that eminence where his father had placed her. For neither King nor people loved Fox, notwithstanding the ironical fact that Fox was the ultra democrat.

Such, then is the secret of the change which on the surface had the appearance of being sudden. It was, rather, gradual, but the English national character is not quick to reveal its deepest feelings. And we must not err, either, in assuming that a high moral code was as requisite for a Prime Minister then as it is to-day. A breath of scandal in our time could turn even a powerful party out of office. But see what Sir Thomas Durrant wrote concerning Pitt on February twenty-fifth, of this same year 1784, to the Earl of Buckinghamshire:

At his age with such abilitys, with such expectations, the pinnacle of political greatness within his reach [Durrant refers to the young statesman's situation]. The friends of the present Ministers are fond of contrasting the virtues of Mr. Pitt's private character with the excesses of gaming, extravagance, or any other particular vice. It is rather problematical whether a man will make the better Minister for having uniformly kept the ten commandments, and would not it be possible to find in history instances of those who, apparently correct in their private conduct, have atchiev'd the most capital publick mischiefs? *

But the tide had turned, Fox's conduct had tainted his own popularity, the hour had now come when the feeling of the country could be put to a test. Some historians have emphasized that in dissolving Parliament George III was taking a tremendous risk, that the country might have sent Fox and his friends back with huge majorities.

I submit that the exact opposite is the true case. It was because the astute, cold and cautious calculator, Pitt, with the mathematical Pretyman by his side, so accurately estimated the position that there could be little chance of defeat. Parliament was prorogued on the twenty-fourth of March, and next day dissolved; yet on the night of the twenty-third Pitt was able to sit down at Downing Street and write a letter to the Duke of Rutland in the following words:

"We are at length arrived within sight of a dissolution. . . . Our calculations for the new elections are very favourable, and the spirit of the people seems still progressive in our favour." Then, in a postscript he adds significantly, remembering a previous defeat, "I shall stand for Cambridge, which is rather unexplored ground at

* "The MSS of the Marquess of Lothian preserved at Blickling Hall, Norfolk," Hist. Mss.. Comn. London, 1905.

present; but I am sanguine in my expectations, though I am afraid I shall feel your absence."

He was thus giving up a safe seat at Appleby and seeking election from his old University, which had refused to elect him previously. Could anything more clearly indicate Pitt's confidence of the result?

But, as usual, Pitt never forgot those who rendered him a service. He had written to Rutland, and now he must send a letter to Sir James Lowther and express his feelings concerning one of those friends of Goostree's who had been on the trip to France. On Sunday morning Pitt addresses Sir James from Downing Street, saying that Messrs. Duncombe and Wilberforce are to be nominated for Yorkshire. "Our friends expect a majority of two to one, if a subscription can be raised to carry on the contest. I have a list of names in town, who are thought likely to subscribe."

The King having felt it his duty to call "as speedily as possible" a new Parliament, Pitt set out from London to Cambridge; and from his old college, Pembroke Hall, on the third of April, being a Saturday night, immediately sent the following gleeful note to his patron, Sir James Lowther:

I am this moment returned for the University by a great majority, and Lord Euston is my colleague. I am impatient to communicate this to you, as I need not now avail myself of the assistance to which I have been so much indebted.

He was politically independent for the rest of his life. Never again had Pitt need of influence to get him into the House of Commons. The University of Cambridge kept him as their representative till he died. Not merely had

his great friends, Euston and Wilberforce, been elected, but one hundred and sixty of Fox's friends—"Fox's martyrs" was the nickname now given—had been defeated, among whom were those two prominent opponents of Pitt, Mr. Coke and General Conway. The new Parliament assembled on May eighteenth, and the young Premier had brought with him a remarkable and convincing proof that the nation would support him in his undertakings. For Fox it was a bitter blow that callow youth should have thus prevailed: but it had to come, if the nation's fortunes were to be salved. To Pitt's wonderful faculty for seeing clearly ahead and his never wavering confidence in his own personal judgment, there was an added reenforcement from the voters which we now see reflected in his speeches and letters. On May twenty-fourth he informed the House that while he was extremely desirous of procuring unanimity, "he was not for purchasing a hollow unanimity by blinking a great constitutional question and passing over the dissolution of the last Parliament." And on the same day he wrote to the Duke of Rutland describing the rival party's efforts: "Opposition argued everything weakly, and had the appearance of a vanquished party, which appeared still more in the division, when the numbers were two hundred and eighty-two to one hundred and fourteen."

Such was the firm quiet temper of one who was still four days short of his twenty-fifth birthday!

And now he had an opportunity to repay the wealthy James Lowther, for whom this same month he obtained a peerage, so that the baronet became Earl of Lonsdale. Already the juvenile Prime Minister had obtained for Thomas Pitt, his kinsman (and some time alumnus of Clare College, Cambridge) a peerage as Baron Camelford of Boconnoc. The latter had represented the family

constituency of Old Sarum. The father of Mr. E. Eliot (who had been one of the three on the trip to France, and married Pitt's sister Harriet), Pitt was able to get made Lord Eliot. For that faithful Hayes tutor, the Reverend Edward Wilson, he obtained a Canonry of Windsor, while Pretyman was made a Canon of Westminster. Thus no man whom Pitt should have remembered could cry out that he had been forgotten in this triumph.

Sir Joshua Reynolds once complained that Pitt had not much attraction toward the arts; and the remark was just. But the fact is that in a highly crowded and concentrated life of Pitt's short duration there was not time, even if there were the inclination, to cover every sphere of interest. There was now before Pitt the serious duty of instituting so many and momentous improvements in the nation's organization that, apart from the complicating incidence of wars and revolutions, there were problems enough to make even the most experienced of statesmen quake at their very contemplation.

Chapter VIII

REFORMATION AND RECONSTRUCTION

The General Election of 1784, with its sweeping results in favor of Pitt's party, not merely brought to a definite end that long Whig rule, which had been such a characteristic of the Georges, but reflected the new enlightenment.

During the previous forty years the House of Commons had changed gradually from an oligarchic body into an assembly that was of a more popular and national nature. The Treaty of Versailles in the previous year had put a stop, or at least a semi-colon, to war; there was in England a spirit not very different from that which manifested itself after the year 1918. A bustling enthusiasm for business and a desire to forget hostilities now became the country's objective. The output of coal had been considerably increased; James Watt was still working to develop that prodigious invention of Newcomen and evolve a satisfactory steam engine which would create the biggest revolution in commerce since ships became ocean carriers; Josiah Wedgwood was making both fame and a fortune approximating to a million pounds sterling by his pottery and porcelain; Adam Smith's ideas on political economics were having their educative influence all over the country; while machinery and factories were the new methods for rapidly creating an increase in British wealth. Thus, the last traces of medievalism were departing, and modernism in every sphere was taking its place.

Pitt found himself in a period of new departures, with revolution of some kind going on all round: in men's minds, in the employment of their energies and money, in their very habits. A breath of fresh air had blown in

and ventilated those stuffy Georgian conventions which had so badly needed essential stimulation, and this air came laden with the perfume of freedom. Liberty! That was, in one word, the new spirit at work. That was the inspiration of the American independence, as very shortly it would be of the French Revolution and the growing English industrial revolution. Adam Smith in *The Wealth of Nations* had spread the doctrine of natural liberty. "All systems either of preference or of restraint," he had written, "being thus completely taken away, the obvious and simple system of natural liberty establishes itself of its own accord."

Thus, before he had come into power, Pitt could already see vanishing that generation which would have no sympathy for reformation in the penal code; or for Poor Law reform. While agriculture was becoming more scientific, the rapid growth of towns was now drawing inhabitants away from villages, and machinery was killing white slavery. Men in all departments of life were beginning to think and reason for themselves, to experiment and explore fresh avenues; so that a larger and wider consciousness was rendered possible. A new renaissance was replacing the unimaginative, uninquiring conventionalism, and new ideas received a welcome instead of being shunned as something shocking. And there is no better illustration of this change than in the contemporary correspondence. Any one who cares to follow Pitt through his letters, will note with amusement how the stilted manner of the seventeen-seventies gradually wears off as he approaches the end of the eighteenth century.

It was a most interesting coincidence that Pitt's entry into power should coincide with the birth of a new England. His own fresh mind and youthful vigor were most

luckily suited for this new epoch. Whereas an older leader would have hesitated to create new precedents, and to feel some nervousness at the developments springing up around him, Pitt was both able to assimilate this new thought and to interpret it politically. He, himself, was full of new ideas, and some he had derived from Adam Smith. A new class of people, too, was fast rising in the towns to wealth and power; this manufacturing community would inevitably be sympathetic of reforms in finance and commerce. They would, likewise, be receptive of new ideas in legislation, as readily as they were admitting steam power into their mills.

Pitt was fortunate in having now arrived on the scene when there was a remarkable unanimity that the country had been paying an extravagant price for her wars; that even glory could be too expensive. He was essentially a man for national peace, prosperity and progress; with improvement schemes up his sleeve, but ready to be disclosed at the first opportunity. Consolidation, reconstruction, renewal on the one hand, were to be accompanied by ruthless scrapping on the other. In one way or another the reforms began so to accumulate that a revolution was in progress without this active change being realized. It was, for instance, this year of 1784 that saw John Palmer starting a mail-coach service from Bristol to London which covered the distance in fourteen hours and improved the postal service. Even the terrible procession to Tyburn gallows had been abolished in the previous year.

The influence of George III in regard to domestic life, with a change from the moral tone of his immediate predecessors, was felt by the middle if not the upper classes. While the latter still both extensively and intensively went on gambling, some attempt was being made

to reform manners by having parties where cards were not played, but ladies could meet men of intellectual tastes. Women of culture and social ability were now obtaining a new regard and found other interests than playing the spinet or talking scandal. Men were more frequently wearing their own hair, though the last man in the village of Hayes to wear the peruke was Gabriel Hutfield* who died in 1846, and his father had been the foreman in building Hayes Place for Pitt's father.

It was a sign of the new times that Richard Arkwright, the Lancashire ex-barber, whose invention of the first spinning-frame of 1769 introduced him to a fortune, was given a knighthood two years after Pitt's General Election triumph. The Prime Minister had readapted the hereditary Pitt personality to the new England, and was in harmony with the change. William Eden, the future Lord Auckland, who was Secretary for Ireland when Pitt had entered Parliament (of whom we shall have more to say presently), in one of his letters (preserved in the Dropmore correspondence) about this date of the election refers somewhat acidly to the "great power and his obsequious Parliament," which Pitt possessed. But it was a power that came naturally out of the special circumstances; it grew indeed quickly, yet there was no forcing.

Thus in 1784 Pitt was, in the words of Macaulay, now "the greatest subject that England had seen during many generations. He domineered absolutely over the Cabinet, and was the favorite at once of the Sovereign, of the Parliament, and of the nation. His father had never been so powerful." Pitt became "the greatest master of the whole art of parliamentary government that has ever existed." But he needed all his own clear

* From a note by the Reverend Canon H. P. Thompson.

brain and all the mathematical mind of Pretyman to assist him in straightening out the financial muddle in which England now found herself. At the close of the Walpole period the national debt was approximately forty-six million pounds. The Wars of Jenkins' Ear and of the Austrian Succession had raised this to seventy-seven million, five hundred thousand pounds. The Seven Years' War had cost eighty million pounds, and the American War ninety-seven million pounds. There was an enormous funded debt of two hundred and twelve million pounds, with an unfunded debt of fourteen million pounds more. In addition to this, the smuggling industry was still illegally robbing the nation of considerable income, and the country's expenditure was two million pounds greater than its revenue.

The problems which from the very first met the young Premier required delicate handling if he were to put the public finances on a sure footing without incurring the people's animosity. Although this was the time of peace, the three-per-cents were down to fifty-six. The first and obvious task must be that of adding to income and improving credit. How did he grapple with these two items? We can here wish for no better insight into his mind than that afforded by his confidential secretary and helper, Pretyman:

> Mr. Pitt was convinced that nothing would tend more directly to promote the former of those important objects, than the suppression of smuggling, which at this time prevailed to an alarming and almost incredible extent, and seemed to be destroying the very vitals of the revenue.*

He therefore introduced a bill to prevent smuggling.

* *Memoirs of the Life of William Pitt,* fourth edition. London, 1822. Vol. I, p. 484.

Vessels of a certain description could be seized up to a distance of four miles from the coast; the building of vessels of certain dimensions and burden was to be prohibited; armed craft were not to be allowed beyond a certain distance from the shore; and so on. This measure passed both Houses. One may observe, as showing the costliness of anti-smuggling operations, that in this year 1784 no fewer than forty-four cruisers with one thousand forty-one men had to be kept sailing about the coast by the Board of Customs at an annual expense to the country of forty-four thousand, three hundred and fifty-five pounds, sixteen shillings. Of these cruisers the largest vessel was the *Repulse,* which was stationed at Colchester and carried a crew of thirty-three men. But she was of two hundred and ten tons. Smaller cruisers were based on London, Gravesend, Rochester, Caversham, Sandwich, Deal, Dover, Rye, Newhaven, Shoreham, Chichester, Portsmouth, Southampton, Cowes, Weymouth, Poole, Exeter, Dartmouth, Plymouth, Looe, Falmouth, Penryn, the Scillies, St. Ives, Milford, while on the East coast, such vessels were located (besides Colchester) at Harwich, Yarmouth, Boston, Hull and Newcastle. There was also a preventive organization ashore, and altogether the smugglers were a costly nuisance.

Now very cleverly Pitt's scheme included also a method of lessening temptation to smuggle tea. Previous writers have failed to note in this connection that as far back as 1745 a Parliamentary Committee had been formed to inquire into the causes of smuggling, and the most effectual methods of preventing the practise. Now during this inquiry some most valuable evidence was afforded by famous ex-smugglers who came forward and received the King's pardon. They informed the committee that the greatest risk was not in landing the goods,

but while crossing the English Channel. The tea was easily sold to the people ashore up to one thousand pounds at a time. There were also men called "duffers," who would walk inland wearing coats which concealed one hundred-weight of tea between two layers of cloth stitched together. On arrival in London these duffers sold the tea to hawkers, who went round disposing of it to householders.

One reason alleged by these expert witnesses was that the East India Company did not supply the legitimate dealers with sufficient tea of the low-priced kinds; whereas the Dutch did. The Committee on March 24, 1745, expressed themselves of the opinion that the high duties charged on tea had been certainly one cause of smuggling. So forty years passed, and the same old thing went on.

When Pitt looked into the matter he found that the duty on tea was one hundred and nineteen per cent. This tax was bringing in about seven hundred thousand pounds a year. He resolved therefore to reduce the duty to twelve and one-half per cent., with a view to encouraging fair trade and not making the risk to the smugglers worth while. The honest tea-trader would find his business increased, and the poor would be able to get this beverage cheaper than hitherto. Moreover, a greater consumption would mean additional commerce for the Honorable East India Company. In order to make up the deficit on tea duties, Pitt proposed a tax on houses based on the number of windows. This too would not affect the poor, seeing that a poor man's dwelling would be small with few windows.

The measure was approved by Parliament, the House of Commons voting in its favor by one hundred and forty-three to forty. Another blow to the smugglers was dealt by Pitt's ability to reduce the tax on foreign spirits and

thus increase the consumption of spirits legally imported. It is, however, only fair to say that after examining the records of the Board of Customs, it does not seem that the spirit-runners gave up and retired from the industry. By Christmas of that year many vessels and boats were still employed smuggling; during the next year one lugger, which was chased by an English frigate for five hours, was fired at and hurriedly threw overboard seven hundred half-ankers of foreign spirits. And in January, 1788, the Board had information that great quantities of tobacco and spirits were about to be smuggled into England from France, Flanders and the Channel Islands.

We come next to June 30, 1784, which was the night when Pitt brought forward his first budget. Here with originality, with a grasp of detail, and a lucidity that was remarkable for his age, Pitt addressed himself to the problem of his annual estimate. He had no alternative but to raise large sums of money somehow, but we must remember that England in those days had not accustomed its people to pay heavy taxes. For the floating or unfunded debt Pitt required fourteen million pounds. He was advised not to fund more than six million, five hundred thousand pounds of this amount, and for the first time in English history he offered this loan—not to an exclusive circle of the Premier's privileged friends —but to the public at the lowest tender. It was a typical piece of Pitt integrity and a clear instance of reform.

But he was still in need of further revenue, and bluntly—yet with an open honesty that added to his popularity—told the nation that further taxation could not be avoided. Such articles as hats, ribbons, gauzes, horses, linens, calicoes, candles, paper, bricks, tiles, hackney-coaches, and the privilege of killing game, would all have to pay their levies. The result was that not only

did he win his way and general approval, but he procured even commendation from his opponents including Fox.

Pitt had wasted no time, and on July sixth he tackled that East India problem. Here he could not fail to arouse opposition, for his bill now differed very little from that which he had introduced at the beginning of the year. But the brilliance of the man, the whole secret of his success, now becomes wondrously obvious even to the casual observer. Of Pitt's rapidly increased popularity this year Doctor Addington was able to write in his letters to Mrs. Stapleton and Lady Chatham.* On January tenth "the number of Mr. Pitt's Friends is much increased." By April twentieth "we . . . toast Mr. Pitt & the Constitution every day." But the public had no opportunity of appreciating that treat which was reserved for those who heard with their own ears, and saw with their own fascinated eyes, this tall young man making his speeches. Not all his magnetism and power are conveyed in the reports: his sincerity and sober mien, his convincing gesture, his freedom from hesitation, his remarkable spontaneity have all evaporated from the printed word.

This East India Bill was certain to arouse opposition, and it was Pitt's duty to present it with all the convincing ability which could be summoned. He owed this both to his King and his own conscience. But such was the quiet confidence of the man, such the perfect grasp of intricate detail, that he went into the House on this as on other occasions, without preparation of any sort. Pretyman (who afterwards changed his name to Tomline) says in one of the suppressed chapters† of Pitt's *Life* that the

* "Chatham Papers."

† Tomline published only three of the intended four volumes of Pitt's

day before Pitt was to bring in this bill Mr. Dundas asked the Premier: "But when do you expect to get two or three hours to yourself, to consider what you are to say to-morrow?"

The question showed that Dundas had yet to learn the nature of Pitt's technique. No one at this time was in closer touch with the Prime Minister than Tomline, the confidential secretary; yet the latter definitely states that Pitt's oratory was unpremeditated and extemporaneous. He would have in his hand not even the heads—the salient points—of his big speech. However important and momentous the subject might be, however complicated the facts, his chief never had to retire first to his room and consider how the presentation would be made. We have here, then, the fruit of those lessons in fluency which Chatham had insisted on in training.

What, indeed, was the secret of Pitt's power as a speaker?

It was found in more than one quality. First, his audience could not fail to notice that indefinable force which came from personal conviction. Pitt was to himself true, and to his friends sincere. That which he said, he meant. If his delivery would have been improved by greater passion, by more vivid imagination and less disdain, there were such openness and such lucidity that he won from his audience from the first their trust. It was because he had little esthetic sense, no ear for music,

Life, averring that he could not without offense publish the whole truth until after the deaths of Henry Addington and Grenville. But it happened that Tomline himself passed away seventeen years before Addington, and seven before Grenville, died. In the year 1903, however, the late Lord Rosebery was permitted to publish for private circulation chapters 23, 24 and 27 of this suppressed portion in book form, some of which appeared in the *Monthly Review* of August, 1930. (See Tomline's *Life of Pitt . . . with an Introduction by the Earl of Rosebery, K.G.* Printed for private circulation. London, 1903.)

no feeling for pictures or coloring, none of that subtle sensitivity which is natural to highly strung natures, that he relied on appealing to the mind rather than the emotions.

The same judgment, the faultless acquaintance with facts all splendidly marshaled, the dignity of expression, the knowledge of constitutional law, the grasp of political economics as interpreted by Adam Smith, the independence of mind in approaching an old problem to find an original solution, the complete mastery of whatever the subject chanced to be, the ability to read the signs of the times and anticipate what was coming, the coolness and courage in hours of crisis, the willingness to be shown the weakness of his strong logic, his particular familiarity with legislative principles, and that power of self-expression in delightful phrasing,—these were the main items which contributed to make of him the complete politician, the perfect Premier.

In the House of Commons he was at his very best; it had been his spiritual home all his life. His administrative ability, his skill in framing statutes, negotiating treaties, playing the game of diplomat, contending as the head which organized fleets and armies, were to come into second place. He was less a fighter than a ruler. He had the barrister's faculty in clarifying a case, casting aside the non-essentials and enabling the main facts to stand out by themselves so conspicuously that even the average mind could perceive them. His weakness consisted not merely in debate—for herein Fox was his superior—but in his detachment from human life. As we look back on his education, we remember that it was intensive rather than extensive. He had always been a specialist, who had never been allowed to graduate in that widest of universities where contact with fellow

men rubs off awkward corners. Social intercourse, companionship among contemporaries, had for him been most strictly limited. Before he had been able to comprehend human nature, to penetrate deeply into other men's characters, to learn the ways of the world, he was altogether occupied in the work of supreme statesmanship. It was an amazing phenomenon that here was one of junior age who fully thought himself able, and *was* able, whose polished speeches and sharp sarcasms, whose constructive reforms and icy genius, were as requisite for the country's future as they were difficult to discover in any other man of the period. Where poetry caused him no reaction, some immense national peril was spontaneously answered by a brilliant policy.

He had become Prime Minister with the aim of a reformer. His first endeavors had been in the direction of finance; his next duty must be toward the East India Company. On that memorable sixth of July he was following up the statements of the previous May and June, when the Company had been compelled to admit their inability to discharge their indebtedness to the public. Historically, sentimentally, politically, commercially, that Company meant to Britons almost everything, now that the American colonies had disappeared. The position was that while this vast corporation was pecuniarily embarrassed, it was still solvent and possessed of immense property. It owed a million of money sterling, and that meant a great deal more than the figure indicates to-day.

Pitt now distinguished himself by the manner in which he tackled the job. In this subject, he said, "are involved the prosperity and strength of this country; the happiness of the natives of those valuable territories in India, which belong to England; and finally the constitution of Eng-

land itself. India has at all times been of great consequence to this country, from the resources of opulence and strength it affords." Pitt therefore insisted on cutting down expenses and establishing economy, especially in regard to the various presidencies. On the other hand the Company's trade with China, which was the most lucrative of all, was to be extended and encouraged.

The interests of the East India Company and the British public being so closely identified, Pitt was compelled to act boldly if disaster were to be avoided. He had no wish to revoke the Company's charter, nor to interfere with the flow of its commerce; but to change the political management of its affairs at home as well as abroad. "The management of the commerce I mean to leave with the company," he reiterated. "The patronage should be separate from the executive government." In other words, while the Crown now took to itself the governing power, the Company's directors could still run the business as a trading concern.

Pitt's reconstruction was to be threefold: (1) At home there was to be a Board of Commissioners, who would be appointed by the King to control all civil and military affairs, revenues, and the Company's territorial possessions. This control was, in effect, to be a sort of superintendence. (2) Out in India all bribery and extortion from natives were to be stopped; discipline among the Company's white representatives to be tightened up; there must be no more young "writers" and cadets being sent out to India than were in excess of the complement. (For it had become a scandal that the younger sons of the best British families were out there scrambling for patronage.) Nor must the Company's "servants" dare to come back to England with purloined property. (3) In fact a Court of Judicature was to be formed in Eng-

land. All persons returning home would be made to swear the value of their property. And within three years of that return, such persons could be tried by this Court for bringing home property to which they had no right.

This bill was so excellent that it was passed by the large majority of two hundred and seventy-one to sixty. Of course there were those who thought its terms harsh, but always many dishonest men find the punishments for breaking the law to be unpleasant. There can be no denying that only a drastic remedy could cure the Indian ills. Pitt was thought to be daring in his comprehensiveness, but he had not been rash. There was muddle, there was mismanagement down to the smallest department. Thus, I find a young ensign named Andrew Boyd, who had gone out recently to serve at Tanjore writing to Lord Charlemont on December 9, 1784, and complaining most bitterly of his disappointment. "The service of the East India Company is very different from the idea I had of it at the time I had the honor of seeing you in London, and even in my smallest expectations I am disappointed. . . . I applied for my pay and got for answer there was no money in the office."* And the British inhabitants of Calcutta were so nervous as to the possibility of being sent forcibly to be tried in England for offenses in India that in July, 1785, they passed no fewer than eighteen resolutions against Pitt's act.†

With such vigor had Pitt imposed his will on Parliament that more business had this session been transacted than in any former period of corresponding length. Apart from immediately instituting two of the most im-

* "The MSS and Correspondence of James, First Earl of Charlemont," Vol. II. Hist. MSS. Comn.

† "The Palk MSS" Hist. MSS. Comn. London, 1922.

portant reforms, he had convincingly demonstrated the value of another revolution: inexperienced but gifted youth could be trusted with statesmanship in its most intricate problems. His eloquence, energy, firm grasp of detail, common sense and determination, had won for him a triumph. Even the strenuous opposition of such strong men as Fox, Burke and Sheridan had failed in attacking the India Bill. In 1834 the East India Company finally lost their exclusive commercial charter. I have examined the log-book of the *Elizabeth,* which was one of the last of this company's ships to make a trading voyage to China. She sailed from the Thames in the spring of 1833, reached China the following January, left the latter in March, arrived at St. Helena in June and thence sailed across the Atlantic to Halifax. After April, 1834, the directors of the East India Company were no longer traders, but advising and assisting in the control of political India. Twenty-three years later came the Indian Mutiny, and on the first of November, 1858, a proclamation was made that the Government of India had been transferred from the East India Company to the British Sovereign. The Board of Control was abolished and a Council of State inaugurated instead. Officially on the first of June, 1874, the historic East India Company, which had begun in the time of Queen Elizabeth, was at length dissolved.

The necessity for parliamentary reform was very much alive in Pitt's brain, but he refrained from introducing it just now, since the moment was inopportune. And it proved that his zeal was thoroughly under command. But Alderman Sawbridge had the temerity to bring forward such a motion, in spite of the efforts of Pitt and Wilberforce to prevent him. Pitt's promise to introduce such a measure in the next session availed not. Saw-

bridge persisted obstinately, and was defeated by one hundred and ninety-nine to one hundred and twenty-five votes, Pitt intentionally voting against it. The session came to a close on August twentieth. It was during this month that Pitt was shot at, though fortunately without injury. Daniel Pulteney records that in conversation with the Premier on August nineteenth, Pitt "did not extend the conversation to some reciprocity of wishing joy. He told me the window through which the man fired was not wider than his body, and, of course, that the ball must have ascended in a very odd direction to miss him."* Admiral Lord Hood, who was staying with the Addingtons, at Upottery in Devonshire, told the physician on August twenty-ninth about Pitt's miraculous escape, and the chatty Doctor Addington in one of his letters† to Lady Chatham passed on the news to Burton Pynsent. Nor was this the only occasion when the statesman's life was jeopardized.

After the year 1783 the Countess never again visited Hayes, but remained at Burton Pynsent. The associations of the home of her beloved husband at Hayes doubtless were of such a nature as to cause her preference for Somersetshire. She became an invalid, and the long correspondence from Doctor Addington is full of his medical advice. The latter was always careful to enclose up-to-date information concerning Pitt and the doings of Parliament, but it was only on rare occasions that the son could find time to leave London and travel to the west of England. Early this year Edward Eliot had been made one of the Lords of the Treasury—another instance of Pitt's loyalty to friends—and Lady Harriet used to come

* "Manuscripts of the Duke of Rutland, preserved at Belvoir Castle," Vol. 3. Hist. MSS. Comn.

† "Chatham Papers." P. R. O.

up to town from Burton Pynsent to stay with her brother. In this way Pitt's sister and his intimate friend would meet. Addington, in one of his letters to Lady Chatham correctly prophesied the incipient romance, and on September 21, 1785, Edward married the Countess's daughter.

Pitt's dutiful affection for his mother was practically illustrated during 1784, when we find him making arrangements to send her money out of his own ministerial income. It was done through Coutts' bank, and he was careful to explain that he was now in a position to afford this action. By the beginning of August Pitt was living in a house on the north side of Putney Heath, which he rented furnished. "I am already in a great measure a country gentleman," he wrote to her, "because, though full of business, it is of a nature which I can do as well at Putney, from whence I now write, as in town."

This autumn saw Pitt full of activity. His official residence in Downing Street had been originally granted by George II to Sir Robert Walpole,* to be annexed to his official post when he held the two appointments of First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer. Pitt threw the dining-room into the study. Putney attracted him in order that he might be able to get away from the worries of Downing Street for a few hours, but the suburban house was found too near Westminster for real escape, and Pitt was not happy in a home that did not belong to himself. Burton Pynsent being too distant, he went no farther away from London this autumn than Brighthelmstone, better known to us as Brighton. For Parliament was to reopen in January, and in the meanwhile he was having a strenuous time preparing for an important session. He had three subjects especially to

* "Dropmore MSS," Vol. 8.

occupy him. The first was concerned with the Treasury and those financial schemes which Parliament had just sanctioned, the second was working out details for the new East India Board of Control, which likewise had just been approved in principle, and the third involved a number of consultations with experts concerning commercial relations in regard to Ireland, that must come before Parliament in February next.

During this autumn, too, Pitt obtained promotion in rank for the Earl of Shelburne, who became the Marquis of Lansdowne; and for Earl Temple, who became Marquis of Buckingham. On the first of December that distinguished lawyer, Lord Camden, joined Pitt as President of the Council. He was now seventy years of age, had been already Chief Justice of the Court of Common Pleas, and afterward Lord Chancellor. He had ably seconded Pitt's father in his efforts to avert the outbreak of hostilities in America; and under altered circumstances, he was to render good service again, so that in 1786 he was given an earldom.

Chapter IX

ATLAS OF THE STATE

The new session opened on January 25, 1785, and the first business was concerned with a matter that had been too long undecided. In the General Election Fox had been a candidate for Westminster, and such was the partizan nature of the times that neither Sir Joshua Reynolds' Duchess of Devonshire nor the Prince of Wales refrained from canvassing on behalf of Fox. While the Duchess purchased with a kiss the vote of a butcher, the Prince rode about wearing Fox's colors.

Now, although Fox had been elected for this constituency, it was alleged that the number of votes was found to be in excess of those on the register. The High Bailiff had therefore allowed a scrutiny. This created trouble. Obviously, had the scrutiny been delayed indefinitely, Westminster would have been without a representative, though Fox was able to enter Parliament by means of the close borough of Kirkwall. When the Westminster elections were debated in the House, Pitt supported the High Bailiff's action, being ill-advised by Sir Lloyd Kenyon, then Master of the Rolls. There can be no doubt but that there was an election scandal; it is not less true that Pitt, in taking a firm line and insisting that the High Bailiff had the right to order a scrutiny, was acting vindictively. His hatred of Fox exhibited itself in a rare expression of small-mindedness. And now Pitt was to be humbled, for the House ordered the Bailiff to make a return and defeated Pitt by thirty-eight votes.

The next subject was with regard to Ireland, which had a population at this date of roughly two and one-half millions, most of whom were wretchedly poor and ill-fed. But the liberty movement of the American colonies had

led to a revolution of the affairs in Ireland, principally with the result that from 1782 there was now a newly constituted independent Irish Parliament; and Ireland was also enjoying Free Trade. It was Pitt's desire to unite England with Ireland by that strong tie of commerce, on the basis of Free Trade and reciprocity. Therefore on February 22, 1785, we see him introducing the matter into the House of Commons, with the object of ending all those jealousies and clamor which had been so prevalent. With his accustomed eagerness for equity, as well as expediency, he was anxious for this commercial intercourse to be encouraged.

Ireland had been debarred from the enjoyment and use of her resources, and its kingdom been subservient to England. "This system of cruel and abominable restraint . . . is at once harsh and unjust . . . impolitic as it is oppressive," he told the House. But he did not press for a vote to-day: the matter was to be brought up some weeks later. Meanwhile on March ninth Fox had a thrust at him, when he accused Pitt of making false assertions in his speech (on the Westminster elections) "for the purpose of rounding his periods." That Pitt stoutly denied, and on this occasion did not shine brilliantly. But I fancy that the reason can be found in a letter written by Doctor Addington that day to Lady Chatham, wherein the gossipy physician, referring to Pitt, says: "The Atlas of the State has had a sore throat of the innocent kind, but is perfectly recovered." "I pray God to preserve Him in Health for the Reformation of the Principles, & the Restoration of the Consequence & Glory of the Kingdom," Addington had written her only three weeks previously.

And now, with the country's finances so well conditioned that Pitt's popularity outside the House was still

rising, he brought forward on April eighteenth once again that question of parliamentary "reform in representation of the people." This was a matter very dear to his heart, and it was to be the last time that he would present it. Already we find him in March writing from Putney Heath to Sir Lloyd Kenyon: "The enclosed paper with which I trouble you, contains a sketch of the Bill which I shall move for leave to bring in on Wednesday. . . . The idea of transferring a certain proportion of representation from boroughs to counties . . ."* will be presently explained.

It was a long speech of some seventeen printed pages. "I am aware of the division of sentiment," he began, "and of the pertinacity with which some men adhere to opinions inimical to every species of reform. But I rise with hopes infinitely more sanguine than I ever felt before, and with hopes which I conceive to be rationally and solidly founded." He did not hesitate to attack both those who, "with a sort of superstitious awe reverence the constitution so much as to be fearful of touching even its defects," and others who were nervous as "to what alarming lengths we might progressively go, under the mask of reformation." That which Pitt sought to effect was "an assembly freely elected, between whom and the mass of the people there was the closest union, and most perfect sympathy."

He then came to the existing practise of purchasing seats. He was perfectly well aware what he was doing, and how many of the members owed their present appearance within the chamber to this thoroughly indefensible custom. "I know," he remarked, "there is a sort of squeamish and maiden coyness about the House in talking

* "The MSS. of Lord Kenyon," Hist. MSS. Comn. London, 1894. Sir Lloyd Kenyon, Bt., was raised to the peerage three years later.

on this subject"; yet outside those walls it was common conversation. But he went on to refer to those "country estates so situated as to command an influence in a decayed or depopulated borough, and to have the power of returning two members to Parliament." He reminded them of the painful truth that such estates were being "sold for more money than they would have done if situated in any other place." Pitt therefore proposed that thirty-six of these decayed boroughs should have their members distributed among the counties instead; and if there were any other rotten boroughs, they were to surrender their franchise so that their members might be transferred to some populous and flourishing towns.

Now in this project Pitt was acting in the most democratic manner, and with a view to make Parliament really representative. Simultaneously, it was an occasion for him to make a gesture of fairness in the direction of those manufacturing communities which were fast revolutionizing English industry. And we must not forget that this change had come independently of the new steam motive power which was now beginning to drive machinery; independent, likewise, of Pitt's reorganization of the country's finances. It was the combination of national reawakening in spirit, of golden opportunities, of the application of new inventions, and of settled finance, that enabled the manufacturing era to develop so marvelously. Pitt's policy in taxation, and the rearrangement of the country's pecuniary resources was already proving itself sound and profitable: yet his, or any future reformer's, hands were tied as long as the rotten boroughs were there. But those eighteenth-century legislators had not yet roused themselves to the new movement which in the cause of liberty had begun in America and had spread to the British Isles as well as France. The drink-sodden

intellects, the convention-bound consciences, of those who sat in the House of Commons could not respond to Pitt's plain honest appeal; so the suggestion was defeated by two hundred and forty-eight votes against one hundred and seventy-four.

Pitt was both right and wrong. There was not the slightest doubt of the scandalous purchase of parliamentary representation. But here was a young man, who at twenty-four had been entrusted with the government of two kingdoms, without ever having to pass through subordinate office. The House could forget his inelegant movement of body; his cold stiff politeness of manner, with scarcely a smile to relieve its frigidity; but his lack of experience with the world of men could not be ignored. Youth is impatient and insistent on riding rough-shod. Pitt saw only the objective without considering whether it was practicable of attainment. The truth is that he was a whole generation ahead of his times in this matter; Parliament was not yet in the mood to surrender its privileges to popular demand. Nor was that demand as yet sufficiently clamorous. So Pitt and his generation had to pass away before this just measure could be passed. It needed a general popular demonstration, the firing of Nottingham castle, mob rule in Bristol, violent agitation in Birmingham, the tolling of muffled bells, the shouts and threats of infuriated crowds, to convince Parliament that there must be no more denying of this readjustment. Thus, and thus only, did the Reform Act come into force during the year 1832; so that one hundred and forty-three members were taken away from small boroughs, while Birmingham, Manchester, Leeds, Sheffield, as well as certain recently grown large towns, together with others hitherto unrepresented, were now able to have adequate share in the country's government.

That Pitt could be most caustic, even in spite of his elders, is well proved by the debate which was being made on May 5, 1785, concerning statements of the East India Company's establishments out in India. Fox, with his customary debating skill, had criticized these statements which he asserted were of a piece with the whole conduct of those in office. This was one of those rare occasions which caused Pitt to laugh, and the Master of the Rolls laughed likewise. No member of Fox's seniority and experience, still less of his inflammable nature, could endure the sarcastic grinning of a self-confident clever youngster. So, not without considerable warmth, Fox remarked: "I see that I am treated with personal indecency by the right honorable gentleman, and by another honorable gentleman, whose indecency is a matter of mere indifference to me."

Fox was still burning with anger because of the Westminster elections episode. But now Pitt, self-possessed, inheritor of Chatham's hauteur and the Countess's iciness, quietly but most ironically replied that, "considering the extreme decorum which at all times distinguishes the arguments of the right honourable gentleman, considering the coolness and moderation of his language, together with the measured propriety of his manner, he has certainly a very substantial ground of complaint, if anything like disrespect and indecency were offered to him."

To Fox, the eloquent, forceful, dexterous debater, with his shrewd thrusts, this riposte by a brilliant junior must have been not a little annoying. Doctor Addington, writing one of his loquacious letters to Lady Chatham this day, remarked:

Friday afternoon & evening display'd the unparallell'd greatness of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Mr. Fox began the debate, & was seconded by Mr. Eden. The

Minister, in his Reply, was All Fortitude, All Justice, & All Wisdom. Mr. Fox rallied, was extremely boisterous about half an Hour, but not heard. The noisy eloquence of his Friend Mr. Burke shared the same Fate. Lord North was a silent Hearer. Mr. Powys, Mr. Marshman & others left the House. The House was cleared of interlopers. But Mr. Fox declined the division, the only wise thing He did that day. Never, surely, was so compleat a Victory gain'd in the House of Commons, since the Days of Yore.*

But Pitt, in his capacity of Chancellor of the Exchequer, was destined to lose some more of his popularity. Naturally Addington always was anxious to send the best news of his previous patient to the invalid mother miles away in the seclusion of Somerset, but the fact is that her son was just now experiencing an anxious time. While the smuggling of tea had been practically stamped out and the country's revenues were unquestionably increasing, more taxation was required to bring in at least four hundred thousand pounds a year. It was therefore Pitt's unpleasant task to propose an additional duty on male servants, a new duty on female servants, duties on retail shops, post-horses, gloves, pawnbrokers' licenses, and salt carried coastwise. These proposals were approved by the House, but only after some opposition and modification.

Outside Parliament Pitt's popularity suffered by this taxation. Thus we find Viscount Sackville on June seventeenth writing from his house in Pall Mall to his son:

We have had a little rioting about the taxing of shops and maid servants. Mr. Pitt was hissed and pursued in going to and from the House of Commons, and in the

* "Chatham Papers," P. R. O.

evening the Guards were sent to disperse the mob collected about his house. Even Mr. Pitt must share the fate of all ministers in this country, and submit to be for a time unpopular.*

But this particular incident rather reflected the truth that Pitt just now was passing through a difficult period: he was learning how fickle a thing was public estimation, how unstable must be environment when all men spoke well of him. For on May twelfth he had returned to the Irish question briefly introduced during the previous February. He was full of the reforming zealot's enthusiasm for this commercial bond. His principle was that "a treaty should be concluded with Ireland, by which that country should be put on fair, equal, and impartial footing with Great Britain in point of commerce, with respect to foreign countries and to our colonies." Those were Pitt's own words, and he wished Ireland in return to contribute her share toward the protection and security of the Empire's general commerce.

His exposition was clear, masterly, inspired by his feeling for justice and that business sense which the technicians term political economy. But he was met with such opposition that his scheme required considerable amendments. These were now in the shape of some twenty resolutions passed on July twenty-second. Unfortunately the fourth resolution stipulated that "all laws . . . made . . . in Great Britain . . . for . . . regulating the trade of the British Colonies and Plantations . . . should be in force in Ireland . . . as in Great Britain." This created so much indignation in the Irish Parliament, that the latter would have nothing to do with the scheme. Why should they become subservient to the English Parliament?

* "Stopford-Sackville MSS."

Thus Pitt's endeavor to bring about a commercial union with Ireland fizzled out. He was grievously disappointed, for he had spent months of thought and interviewed distinguished experts on the matter. It was such incidents as this which made him retire within his own soul more than ever. Although the merchants of Manchester welcomed him with enthusiasm and gave him a banquet, Pitt was more than previously the man of few friends and chilly exterior. Throughout his official career he was destined to experience determined opposition. While Fox left to the country no public measure to earn our thanks, he was invaluable in keeping Pitt's brilliant mind well sharpened. While Fox was destructive rather than constructive; yet his acute intellect, his keen logic, his alert ingenuity, his readiness to perceive any weak spot in Pitt's armor, were not altogether to be regretted. They were the means of preventing Pitt's self-reliance decaying into self-satisfaction. Only the son of Chatham could have kept Fox out of office for so long, yet in the meantime the collisions between these two personalities afforded most luminous sparks. And in this connection Pitt's faithful confidant makes the following arresting comparison between the two rivals:

Their talents seem to have been more immediately suited for their respective situations. Had their destinations been changed, I am strongly inclined to think that Mr. Pitt would not have been so formidable an opponent as Mr. Fox, and that Mr. Fox would not have been so successful a Minister as Mr. Pitt.*

In this year (1785) was sold Hayes Place to Mr. James Bond, who later became knighted. Afterwards it

*See Chapter 27—one of the suppressed chapters—in *Tomline's Life of Pitt . . . with an Introduction by the Earl of Rosebery, K. G.* Printed for Private Circulation. London, 1903.

passed into the hands of Viscount Lewisham, and eventually to Sir Everard Hambro. The Pitt family had no further connection with this home. But in the same autumn William Pitt moved from Putney Heath to Kent, the county of his birth, though eventually he would return to Putney to die. What he required was a residence not too far away from Downing Street, yet sufficiently distant to avoid those interruptions which necessarily occurred as long as he was so get-at-able as in Putney.

He therefore purchased Hollwood Hill, some fifteen miles from London, which was not far from Hayes and had been the scene of bird's-nesting in his younger years. Being a bachelor with limited means, he required only a small house, but with it there came two hundred acres, to which he afterward added other land. He even enlarged the house, and became for short periods a country gentleman. The price of this estate was eight thousand, nine hundred and fifty pounds, of which four thousand pounds had to be raised by mortgage, for his private financial condition (as will be made clear in a later chapter) was always remarkably weak. What delighted him was to retire here into peace and quietness, to think over his problems of State, to wander about the wild and picturesque scenery, watch the laborers improving the grounds and forming a lake. On the way down to Hollwood in his carriage he would fill up the time by reading some classic, and there would be his well-filled library waiting for him to browse. He formed such a fine collection, indeed, that on his death the library fetched one thousand nine hundred pounds, his old tutor Tomline (Pretyman) being the buyer. Sometimes to Hollwood the Prime Minister would invite a few of his men friends, and this retreat for him corresponded to what Hayes Place had been to Chatham. In Downing

Street Pitt used to breakfast at nine, with frequently a political guest to talk business. While Parliament was sitting he could rarely take his morning ride in the Park, but Hollwood meant freedom and healthy horse exercise, for which Doctor Addington was always insistent.*

"After toiling in his room over revenue details or foreign despatches on which the fate of nations depended," records Tomline of Pitt at Hollwood, "he would walk out," begin weeding the garden, or giving directions for the removal of a shrub. But always on his table indoors would be found his beloved Homer or Horace, which were to him a mental tonic. The house has long since been pulled down, but the fine view extending to the heights of Sydenham was in those days unspoiled by the builder. Not far away from him at Beckenham was living William Eden, a politician fifteen years older than Pitt, and destined to be associated with him in various phases. It needs little imagination to see the two House of Commons Members meeting at Hollwood and Beckenham, fixing up next session's plans, while the port was passed round the polished table and the winter's fire crackled under the marble mantelpiece. And evidently it was after one of these visits that on December fifth, this year, Eden wrote a letter to the Earl of Carlisle saying, "Mr. Pitt has proposed to me to undertake the Commercial Negociations with France."† The subject was not to come up till next year, but here was Pitt busy making detailed schemes for the improvement of Britain's international trade.

And there was Pitt's former playmate, Henry Ad-

* In his letter to Lady Chatham on February sixteenth this year, Addington remarked of her eldest son, who had succeeded to the title: "Lord Chatham says, He is quite well, but He looks, as if He wanted exercise in the air." "Chatham Papers," P. R. O.

† "The Carlisle MSS."

dington, to be seen. It was owing to Pitt's friendship and influence that the doctor's son forsook the law and took up politics. In 1783 he entered Parliament as M.P. for Devizes, and now in January, 1786, he was to second the Address at the reopening. Lady Chatham wrote the proud father a courteous message on the occasion, to which the physician replied on February ninth, expressing thanks for her "kind congratulations" on his boy being now "in the great Council of the Nation." Nor does Doctor Addington omit to mention that Mr. Pitt is well, and "His Hereditary Laurels gather every day round his Brow more & more." Three years later Pitt was to secure for the son the distinction of Speaker of the House of Commons.

It was on February 27, 1786, that the Duke of Richmond's plan for the fortifying of Plymouth and Portsmouth was keenly debated in the House of Commons. Pitt spoke on behalf of this Government measure, yet there were many members who were entirely opposed to this idea, basing their objections on the need for economy. "But," asked Pitt, "should a war happen, where is economy? . . . The very expenses of one year's loan would amount to more than the whole of those fortifications which might have secured us peace." Pitt was no great strategist, and officers of the Royal Navy thought rather of fighting any future enemy out at sea than in Plymouth Sound or at Spithead. He had a poor case to plead, and after a long discussion the House voted one hundred and sixty-nine for Pitt's motion, while one hundred and sixty-nine voted against. The Speaker's casting vote was then given against Pitt.

We thus observe that rebuff after rebuff had been suffered. In regard to the Westminster elections, and then as to parliamentary reform, Pitt had been definitely

defeated. His Irish commercial plan had required reconstructing, and had then been refused by Ireland. And now on a government measure he had again failed to win. What was happening? The answer is that apart from the steady and powerful opposition which Fox could always present, Pitt was not perfectly supported. The reason for the latter was twofold. First, his youth and superior manner had caused both jealousy and resentment among older men; but there was no real homogeneity among his followers. It could not be said of these that they were blind loyalists to their leader; but rather that they formed an uncontrolled crowd made up of individualists. At the best they consisted of two parties: (a) those who supported the Crown and therefore Pitt (for never had the King been so popular as now); and (b) those who adhered to Pitt for personal reasons. It was, so to say, a kind of coalition and not too closely fused at that, which was keeping him sustained; while, on the other hand, Fox's was in itself the largest personal party.

But during these first nine years from 1784 Pitt was able, in spite of everything, to revolutionize the financial condition of England, to restore her public credit, to dispel the pessimism which had set in, and to advance prosperity till this was unhappily hindered by the effects of the French Revolution. Not all a Prime Minister's best work is done in Parliament; and for Pitt there was, in his administrative labors, being added up some of his finest successes. During these comparatively quiet years, be it understood, a new England wealthier and more powerful than the days before the American colonies left her, was growing up. Often enough we come across at this period some vessel named *Trade's Increase,* and that exactly reflected the new spirit at work. If the ex-

chequer were not yet quite full, at least Pitt's financial reforms were gradually filling it, manufacturers and shipowners were busy, the smugglers were having an anxious time, and the Customs were not quite so frequently being cheated. His task of rescuing the country from enveloping peril had begun well; his next duty must be first to raise her till she reached commercial eminence, and then to elevate her to political primacy.

Pitt was not meant for team-work. Like Oliver Cromwell, Captain John Smith, Cecil Rhodes, or Lord Kitchener, he was so full of personal individualism that he was clearly intended to lead, to organize, to inaugurate. He became regarded as a financial wizard, whose wand could bring order from chaos, success out of failure. Only the finest intellects could see through the tricks, though that did not prevent whole-hearted admiration. But the average man was content to be amazed, and to let it go at that. He was only too satisfied with the practical results. What the ordinary voter did not see was all those diligent hours spent at Hollwood, at Downing Street, in conjunction with Tomline and others, wrestling with figures and statements, evolving therefrom a clear but simple policy.

Of such a result we have no better example than that enunciated on March 29, 1786, which was a most important occasion in his career as Prime Minister.

Chapter X

TAXATION AND TREATY

Pitt's endeavor to establish a commercial tie with Ireland had failed because the jealous interference of English manufacturers had made the scheme impossible of acceptance to the Irish. But the scheme which he now proposed, was one of a more complicated nature for encouraging commercial optimism. It was far wider in its conception, and its basis was finance, yet its appeal was largely to business men. "In England," wrote Adam Smith, "the seat of government being in the greatest mercantile city in the world, the merchants are generally the people who advance money to the government. By advancing it they do not mean to diminish, but, on the contrary, to increase their mercantile capitals."*

In the present instance the wizard was about to conjure up a fund without increasing taxation more than slightly, and without asking the merchants to lend their wealth. His methods of raising money having already proved such a success, he brought forward on March twenty-ninth a suggestion for reducing the national debt, and thus giving a still sounder character to the country's monetary position. The idea was not altogether new. Walpole had tried a sinking fund, and here was Pitt encouraged to reduce the debt by a fixed system every year. This is how he introduced the plan:

"The situation of the country, loaded with an enormous debt, to pay the interest of which every nerve has been stretched, and every resource nearly drained, carries with it a stronger recommendation than any arguments I could possibly adduce. . . . To you do the public turn

**Wealth of Nations,* 1822 edition, Book V, Chap. III.

their eye, justly expecting, that from the trust you hold, you will think it your duty to make the most serious efforts, in order to afford them the long-wished-for prospect of being relieved from an endless accumulation of taxes, under the burthen of which they are ready to sink."

Never did Pitt's analytical mind so ably succeed in clarifying and vitalizing an otherwise complex and dull subject. But his presentation and elucidation made the whole subject delightfully simple. A select committee had been at work on the national figures and produced the statement that the country's income for the preceding months was as follows: (1) Michaelmas, 1784, to Michaelmas, 1785: fifteen million, three hundred and seventy-nine thousand, one hundred and eighty-two pounds. (2) January 5, 1785, to January 5, 1786: fifteen million three hundred and ninety-seven thousand four hundred and seventy-one pounds. Pitt believed that this could be taken as the annual income likely to continue, although "a sudden disaster may blast all our hopes." Still, the Customs were at last doing well, even if illicit traffic "driven from its stronghold of tea" now lurked elsewhere: "the measures taken two years ago, under the articles of tobacco and spirits, have caused the smuggling of these to subside to a greater degree, and have much increased our revenue."

Now the Committee also found that the annual expenditure of the nation amounted to fourteen million four hundred and seventy-eight thousand pounds. There remained, consequently, a surplus of about nine hundred thousand pounds. This amount he proposed applying to a decrease of the annual debt. By placing a sixpenny tax on every gallon of spirits, taxing imported deals and battens, perfumery and hair powder, he expected to make up another one hundred thousand pounds. Thus in all

there would be one million pounds available each year toward paying off the national debt. It was to go on undisturbed, bearing compound interest. Placed in the hands of certain commissioners, two hundred and fifty thousand pounds were to be applied by them every quarter to buying up stock.

Pitt won such universal approval for this sinking fund that it was agreed to without opposition. Still, he was not the originator of this idea and frankly made that admission. "I am very far from ascribing any merit to myself in suggesting this scheme," he remarked in his speech. Richard Price (1723-1791), an intellectual Non-conformist minister, who was a writer on morals, politics and economics, had as far back as 1771 published an *Appeal to the Public on the Subject of the National Debt.* This publication excited no little controversy and influenced Pitt to reestablish this sinking fund for extinction of the national debt. Price, with his Welsh ardor, was a great exponent of civil and religious liberty, and had strenuously opposed war with the American colonies. An intimate friend of Franklin, he was given by Yale an LL. D. at the same time that Washington received his degree.

But when Pitt insisted that this reserved fund must not be broken in upon, he was obviously remembering Adam Smith's dictum:

"A sinking fund, though instituted for the payment of old, facilitates very much the contracting of new debts. It is a subsidiary fund always at hand to be mortgaged in aid of any other doubtful fund, upon which money is proposed to be raised in any exigency of the state. . . . A momentary suspension of the payment of debt is not immediately felt by the people, and occasions neither murmur nor complaint. To borrow of the sinking fund

is always an obvious and easy expedient for getting out of the present difficulty."*

As a result of Pitt's plan ten and one-quarter millions sterling of indebtedness had been paid off by 1793, but then came war; here was that "sudden disaster" which the Premier feared might "blast all our hopes." It did indeed effect that; the nation had to borrow vast sums at high rates and apply part of this money to paying off debts. Still, the sinking fund was able to assist public credit, it afforded Pitt nationally increased confidence, and even Fox admitted twenty years later that this measure "has been very beneficial to the nation." The weak feature, of course, was that it required extra taxes every year, and in the long run left the country pretty much as before. It was abandoned in 1828, but it had certainly proved its value as a temporary expedient. In 1775 Great Britain's national debt amounted to one hundred twenty-nine million, one hundred forty-six thousand three hundred and twenty-two pounds. In this year 1786 it had grown to two hundred and fifty million pounds. But at the Peace of Amiens it had, because of the war with France, reached five hundred and seventy-four million pounds.

It was during 1786, also, that to his great grief Pitt was to lose by death his sister Harriet† who in the pre-

* *Wealth of Nations,* 1822 Edition, Book V, Chap. III.

† She became ill on September twenty-third, and within a week she was dead. Pitt, amid his cares of State, wrote to Mrs. Stapleton (Lady Chatham's companion at Burton Pynsent) in which he signed himself "Sincerely and affectionately yours." He was anxious to convey the news that his sister was dying, but feared the shock to his aged mother. On September 29, 1786, after Harriet had passed away, he wrote to his brother, Lord Chatham, from Downing Street: "My dear Brother. . . . Eliot certainly mends tho' slowly . . . He expressed a wish to-day of attempting to write to my Mother, but I dissuaded it for the present, as thinking it too soon for Both . . . The sad concluding Ceremony is to take place on Monday. My kind Love to all. Ever your most affectionate Brother, W. Pitt." "Chatham Papers," P. R. O.

vious year had married his friend Eliot. But there was much else to occupy his mind this year. For in June, 1785, there had reached England, after thirty-five years of service in India, Warren Hastings. Here was a man of fifty-three, who came ashore with his savings of eighty thousand pounds, prepared to enjoy the life of an English gentleman. He had spent a distinguished career abroad, filled the unique office of Governor-General, and been responsible for the consolidation of the British Indian Empire. He had served the East India Company long and well, he was an able if harsh statesman, but there were now certain grave accusations which were being brought against him in the House of Commons.

They were promoted not by Pitt's followers but by the Opposition represented by Burke, Fox, Sheridan and others. This is no place to weigh the merits of a man whose mixed character was that of one who coveted, and won by bargaining, another man's wife; who was a ruthless but splendid administrator, fearless and rapacious; whose faults were surpassed by the greatness of his Empire achievements; whose hard-heartedness and somewhat lax principles were counter-balanced by his dauntless courage, his genius for ruling, his disregard of money for himself while being insistent for the East India Company's rights. But we shall remember that Pitt's East India Act of 1784 had marked an end to those days when (in the words of Macaulay) "the business of a servant of the Company was simply to wring out of the natives a hundred or two hundred thousand pounds as speedily as possible, that he might return home before his constitution had suffered from the heat, to marry a peer's daughter, to buy rotten boroughs in Cornwall, and give balls in St. James's Square."

The first attack on Hastings had been on account of

WARREN HASTINGS

Consolidator of the Indian Empire.

the Rohilla War that had been fought as far back as the year 1772, though it was only now that the Opposition brought the matter up in the House of Commons. The Rohillas were a band of Afghans against whom Hastings sent a brigade and turned them out of Rohilkhand after a bloody battle; but Hastings had despatched this force at the request of Shuja-ud-Dowlah, who had set his mind on obtaining this rich district. The bargain was that Shuja-ud-Dowlah should pay four hundred thousand pounds sterling for this military help. The campaign became a shameful episode of barbarity, rapine, butchery and conflagration, for which Hastings was morally responsible. Still, the House of Commons on June 2, 1786, defeated this first charge.

On June thirteenth, however, Fox introduced a motion which accused Hastings of having tried to ruin the Rajah of Benares by demanding an extraordinary subsidy. Rajah Chait Singh, zemindar of Benares, was one of the vassals of Bengal, who had refused Hastings' demand for a war contribution. Therefore the Governor-General in July, 1781, proceeded to Benares, arrested the Rajah, confiscated his treasure, deposed him, and bestowed his zemindar on the Rajah's nephew. As a result of the commotion which Hastings thus caused, an addition of two hundred thousand pounds a year was made to the East India Company's revenue.

Now, while Fox spoke on this Benares incident, Pitt sat listening with fixed and earnest attention, because he realized that this was a grave matter affecting "both the honor and dignity of the British House of Commons." The soul of probity, Pitt was not going to sell his conscience for the sake of his party. Normally, it would have been his pleasure and privilege to advise the King to give Hastings a peerage for services in India: but a

sense of fairness convinced him that the ex-Governor-General was not wholly to be defended. Pitt even went so far as to accuse him for having treated the Rajah "in an arbitrary, tyrannical manner." There was also a third charge of extortion. So it was that, like a long-drawn-out serial story, this Hastings affair went on and on, forming the subject for debate every now and again. Fox's motion of June 13, 1786, had won by one hundred and nineteen votes to seventy-nine, and among the majority Pitt too had voted. In the following February Pitt's voting on the additional charge showed that an impeachment of Hastings was inevitable; and on April third, by a large majority (that again included Pitt) Hastings' fate was confirmed. On May ninth Pitt boldly told the House that they could "no otherwise consult their own honor, the duty which they owed their country, and the ends of public justice, than by sending up the impeachment to the House of Lords."

This trial before the Upper House did not begin in Westminster Hall, however, till February 13, 1788; that is to say, the following year. It lasted for one hundred and forty-five days, extending over no less a period than seven and one-quarter years. The leaders of the impeachment were Burke, Fox, Sheridan, Windham and Grey; though the name of Philip Francis was not allowed to be one of them. From 1774 to 1781 Francis had been serving in India as the ablest of the four Councilors appointed to assist the Governor-General. But he was a fierce antagonist of Hastings, was wounded by the latter in a duel, and returned to England where he became a Member of Parliament. It was Sir Philip Francis who is reasonably believed to have been the author of the famous *Letters of Junius*. Hastings' trial at last ended on April 23, 1795, when he was acquitted. But the effect

of Pitt's India Act of 1784; of his scrupulous regard for honor before politics in voting with the Opposition, coupled with the detailed investigation into the Governor-General's conduct, was to insure that henceforth British officials sent out to administer India should be of the highest possible character.

Pitt, by his independent integrity, had once more attracted the country's confidence to himself. But while this trial was going on he was still pursuing his reforms. He had in mind those principles laid down by Adam Smith in favor of unrestricted trade:

> It can never be the interest of those landed nations, if I may call them so, to discourage or distress the industry of such mercantile states, by imposing high duties upon their trade, or upon the commodities which they furnish. Such duties, by rendering those commodities dearer, could serve only to sink the real value of the surplus produce of their own land, with which, or, what comes to the same thing, with the price of which those commodities are purchased.*

That was why during 1786 he had sent William Eden to arrange a commercial treaty with the French, which it was hoped would have more success than that attempted with the Irish. Eden was another case of a later offspring being extremely gifted. He was not the first, but the third, son of Sir Robert Eden, Bt., and was to make a name for his statesmanship though especially for his diplomacy. He had given up a legal for a political career, entered the House of Commons in 1774, and married Eleanor, daughter of Sir Gilbert Eliot. The latter afterwards became Earl Minto. For a reason that will appear in a subsequent chapter, these details are worth

* *Wealth of Nations*, Book IV, Chapter IX.

noting. It was Eden who in 1778 was sent to America as one of the five commissioners to try to settle the disturbances. But it was not till he accepted office under Pitt in December, 1785, as already mentioned, that the most significant part of his career begins. This commercial mission to Versailles was very difficult, requiring the utmost patience as well as tact. He succeeded admirably, so that in 1787 Pitt sent him to Madrid as special Ambassador Extraordinary, and two years later obtained for him an Irish peerage as Baron Auckland.

When Parliament met in January, 1787, this commercial treaty with France was objected to by that very Fox who but six years later was to disgust his best friends by eulogizing the French Revolution. To-day he was basing his opposition on the ground that France was the natural enemy of England; he was supported by that powerful phalanx of Burke, Sheridan and Francis. On February fifth, however, Pitt was in one of his most sarcastic moods when in the House of Commons he referred to "the abusive torrent of invective which has been so illiberally thrown out" by Burke. But we must quote the following passage in order to appreciate the natural flow of Pitt's eloquent anger:

In abuse and personality to contend with such an opponent, is very far beyond my powers, and much more beyond my wishes . . . such intemperate, gross, abusive, and outrageous language as was this day made use of, surpasses, beyond comparison, the most violent and injurious expression which ever escaped the lips even of that right honourable gentleman, and consequently of any other person who ever spoke within these walls. For my own part, I avoid, as studiously as possible, even in the most hasty moments, the introduction of personality. Whenever I meet a man whose conduct has produced an unfortunate change of character, and whose ill-temper

and spleen are proportioned to the disappointments experienced, and the odium which surrounds him, endeavoring by abuse and malevolence to reduce other characters on a level with the wretchedness of his own—though such a situation may lay claim to my compassion, that sentiment must naturally be blended with a portion of disgust.

It seems almost impertinence that a young man could dare to speak in that manner of one who was thirty years his senior; yet all this while we forget youthfulness and think rather of the "Atlas of the State," whose head was much older than the rest of his body, whose shoulders were bearing an increasing burden. But this fragment of speech is indicative of Tomline's assertion that Pitt was always at his best in a reply to his opponent. While he was usually fair, candid, and even apologetic at times, Pitt was without mercy in exposing objections that were frivolous and unfounded. His outpouring of ridicule, sarcasm, invective, were the more powerful because of their restraint and perfect diction. Every word had been carefully yet spontaneously selected as the most suitable; every word had been well polished and placed in proper juxtaposition.

While in his letters and memoranda, his drafts and written statements, one finds many deletions and emendations—especially when it is a time of stress and crisis —yet his speeches were revised in his head as he gave utterance. Tomline, who so often listened to his eloquence, has left this appreciation of it: "Its grand characteristics were clear enunciation, uninterrupted fluency, correctness of language, perspicuity of arrangement, cogency of reasoning, and dignified action. There was no hesitation, no prolixity, no irrelevant digression."* It was Pitt's perfect command of self and words that enabled him to

**Life of Pitt.* Suppressed Chapter 27.

express such wrath as the above in forcible and accurate phrasing. The sting is there, and it is none the less painful for that it is wrapped up in animated, beautiful and luminous expression. Above all there is rarely a Pitt speech wherein he is not the complete master of his subject.

When this French treaty was again discussed on February twelfth, it was made clear by Pitt that in purchasing from France wine and brandy—"the luxuries of her soil"—we should obtain these on easier terms and revive the previous national taste; and he was not unmindful of the likely effect on smuggling. "The reduction of duties," he explained, "would have a material effect on the contraband in this article"; for, at present, about a million gallons of brandy were yearly being brought into England. Of this amount only about three-fifths were imported legally, while two-fifths were smuggled. But at this period English people were consuming a great deal of tea, gin, brandy, to say nothing of Madeira, Canary, Rhenish and Portuguese wines. Pitt was careful to emphasize that the admission of French wines would not "supplant the wines of Portugal, nor of Spain"; and he (we shall not forget) was brought up on port, was still enjoying it and allowing himself to take rather more than was good for his health.

Pitt, so broad-minded, so anxious for his country's increased trade, so firmly convinced that it was internationally profitable to open up new markets by removing barriers, had no sympathy whatever with those who regarded France as Fox pretended. "I shall not hesitate to contend against the too-frequently advanced doctrine," Pitt declaimed, "that France is, and must be, the unalterable enemy of Britain." So by a large majority this commercial agreement was approved, while outside Parlia-

ment manufacturers were delighted for the opportunity of selling their products abroad, and the shipowners would receive increased freights through the demand for greater supplies.

In houses of the upper English classes at this time dinner was usually at five P. M. and supper at eleven P. M. The middle classes dined at three P. M. The result of Pitt's Eden treaty was seen in the much larger consumption of French wines at table. But I can not find that Pitt's optimism in regard to brandy-smuggling was in actuality justified. This illicit industry was still too remunerative, and the coast of France too close, for Acts of Parliament to be of much influence. My own researches convince me that it was not legislation, the preventive service, or all the cruisers, which eventually stopped the running of brandy into England. It was the change in social habit, dating from the mid-nineteenth century, when whisky from Scotland began to be preferred to brandy from across the Channel, that really caused smuggling to die out. Space will not permit of more than one instance that even during 1805 this practise was still prospering. The Customs authorities were alarmed, and their revenue officers exhorted to perform their duties to the fullest extent; but in Kent and Sussex, especially at such places as Hastings, Folkestone, Hythe and Deal, large gangs of men still went on with the job. It was all well organized, so that the oncoming cutter or lugger could be signaled from the shore usually by waving a lantern, but sometimes by setting on fire a bundle of straw, burning a blue light, or firing a pistol —by night. During the light hours craft in the offing communicated by lowering or hoisting one of their sails.

So we are not surprised that on the night of February 25, 1805, although the two Government cutters *Tartar*

and *Lively* were cruising close to Dungeness, keeping a careful lookout, the large, decked, smuggling lugger *Diana* arrived from France and beached herself. She was seized and found to be running the following cargo: 665 casks of brandy, 118 casks of rum, 237 casks of Geneva gin, one basket of wine, 119 bags of tobacco, and 43 pounds of tea. A great mob of infuriated landsmen with firearms and bludgeons came rushing down to the beach to rescue *Diana*. There was an ugly scene, the revenue men were compelled to retire to some neighboring barracks, and it was only when a sergeant and his guard from the Lancashire Militia came to assist that the smugglers were driven from the beach with one man shot.

It was during 1787 that Pitt received a legacy of three thousand pounds bequeathed by his friend, the Duke of Rutland, though this did not avail much in preserving the Premier from private debts. In January of this year Pitt showed his gratitude for Tomline's assistance, during all these financial schemes, by obtaining for him the Bishopric of Lincoln. Episcopal duties in the Church of England being then but lightly regarded, the former tutor was still able to help the Prime Minister in secretarial work, besides extending advice on purely political matters. It was a strange age and contained many eccentric people. For just as Chatham received Burton Pynsent from a stranger, so this Bishop in 1803 was left a considerable estate by a Marmaduke Tomline—a mere acquaintance who had not seen Pitt's great friend more than half a dozen times. For convenience' sake I have in the last few chapters spoken of Pretyman as Tomline: but it was only from 1803 that, on this inheritance, the alteration of name took place. Pitt's correspondence indicates how frequently the Prime Minister was being approached to obtain jobs and preferment for friends and strangers,

and he was singularly attentive to these demands on his goodness. At one time he went so far as to try to get George III to make Tomline Archbishop of Canterbury, but the King drew the line at this. It would have been setting up a dangerous precedent for rewarding other Prime Ministers' secretaries.

Whether it was getting a small job in London for the faithful Mrs. Sperry, the Burton Pynsent housekeeper, who had once fetched him home from Cambridge, or a one-hundred-pound-a-year-post as Registrar of Wine Licenses for a friend of William Lowther, or for some ambitious and dissatisfied cleric who thought he ought to be given promotion, Pitt was more than obliging. Still, he could deliver a snub in the most perfect manner when requisite. And there is among the "Chatham Papers" one of the most polite, dignified and crushing examples of such a letter written in June, 1791, to the Bishop of Lichfield who was angling for the Deanery of St. Paul's. Yes: William Pitt was a gentleman, who looked for gentlemanly conduct in others. But woe to any who dared to take the smallest liberty with him, or attempt the slightest familiarity! Not the Arctic atmosphere could provide a more frigid reaction.

From the generation when Virginia had been first planted, England had encouraged the fallacious idea that new lands were the most suitable regions for the reception of the older country's criminals. When the American colonies gained their Independence, Great Britain found that this outlet for unwanted delinquents was barred. But Captain Cook during his voyage of 1770 had surveyed part of the east Australian coast, and seventeen years later we find Pitt's Government sending out a squadron of ten sailing ships, transports and store vessels, convoyed by H. M. frigate *Sirius*. Convicts of both sexes reached

Port Jackson on whose southern shore Sydney, New South Wales, now stands; and thus some of those hardy smugglers who had been evading Pitt's taxes began clearing the ground for the rearing of a great Australian commonwealth.

Chapter XI

PITT THE PILOT

England's position at this date was still one of isolation, politically. Commercially, this exclusiveness was being broken down by the teaching of Adam Smith, the policy of Pitt and the development of the mercantile marine, so that the East India Docks had to be put in hand during 1789. There were so many and such large East Indiamen that this wet dock accommodation was now very necessary for the London river. But the port of Liverpool, by reason of the American trade, was slowly growing into rival importance. Everywhere about the kingdom there was a vernal vigor, with Pitt's Tory party carrying out an advanced progressive liberalism. There had been nothing like it since the enthusiasm of Elizabethan days.

The nation was responding to a new sense of humanitarianism, of nobler ideas. Through more enlightened leadership she was beginning to see life as a whole, and not just one narrow section. New facts were arriving every month, from which fresh conclusions were being derived and inspiring new undertakings in every sphere of life. The Army had started to reform its management when, in 1783, the War Office took over control of its finance and recruiting. Rowlandson's prints still indicate fat-bellied, pig-tailed flag-officers sitting in a stern-cabin drinking their wine just as fast as a servant can uncork the bottles. But very active service, and the three serious mutinies of 1797 would soon lead to some necessary overhauling in the Navy. In matters of religion the Evangelical Revival had breathed the first signs of new life, and in 1784 the first bishop was consecrated for English-speaking people outside England. In literature Blake's

mystical poetry was a rebellious protest against existing artificiality. New ideas were slowly being received into agriculture, for it was still a country of farmers relying on their sale of corn.

Pitt consolidated the Customs, Excise and stamp duties; a most intricate task which necessitated nearly three thousand resolutions. But he performed his work so well that even Burke returned him thanks for having in "so masterly and intelligible a manner brought forward a plan" that was obviously necessary. When in April of this year 1787, Pitt introduced the budget, he was in a position to demonstrate the flourishing condition of the revenue, which would enable him to provide for all the services and apply the million pounds toward the national debt's reduction, without any loan or the imposition of a new tax. But now came the first suggestion of a war cloud, when, in spite of Pitt's stated reference to France, he realized that she was endangering the independence of Holland. The Prince of Orange was disposed toward an alliance with Britain, but had been compelled by the "patriot party" who were in alliance with France, to leave the Hague. Appeal was therefore made both to Prussia and to England. The former sent an army to reinstate the Prince, and Pitt promised the assistance of the British fleet. France having pledged aid to the opposite side, there seemed evidence of the war cloud bursting. Pitt's position was this: British commerce was just now so prosperous, the increased taxation was working with such excellent results, that he was most anxious not to disturb the present and future fruits of peace.

On the other hand it was essential that Holland's independence should not be compromised. Therefore, if needs be, he was willing with reluctance to accept war. Being a man of cold logic and not of unstable emotion,

he began to prepare for hostilities by an increase of the Army and Navy. But just as trouble seemed imminent, France withheld, the Prince of Orange found himself restored, and before the end of October both France and Britain had ended their warlike preparations. Nevertheless, two results followed from this incident: First, Prussia and Britain entered into a treaty with Holland, so that the "balance of power" in Europe was once more a political fact; secondly, Britain in emerging from her isolation, had simultaneously regained some of that international eminence which it had been Chatham's work to bring about. But Pitt's was the mind of a student, a scholar, rather than a warrior. His brain was constructive rather than destructive, and his patriotic fervor was not essentially bellicose.

At this period he was, so to speak, the director in charge of a very fine business which a few years ago was almost bankrupt, but now, thanks to his careful nursing and management, was growing fast into a healthy concern. Unless he could see some opportunity for extending that business, he meant to avoid direct competition with rival firms. The commercial understanding with France had received a nasty jolt, but the new international alliance was to save the independence of Sweden, and British trade up the Baltic was to receive encouragement.

The next five years (1788-1793) are almost wholly taken up with the domestic problems of Britain, though there were two outstanding matters which extended overseas. The first had regard to slavery, and the second had in it the elements for causing war with Spain. But, otherwise, this period is rather a placid prelude to those terrific events which were to happen on sea as well as land. William Wilberforce, who was of the same age as Pitt and had known him very slightly at Cambridge,

had inherited a fortune, entered Parliament at twenty-one as member for Hull, and became both a political supporter and keen friend of Pitt. A member of that exclusive and go-ahead "Goostree" set, there happened during 1785 a crisis in his private life. He forsook gaming, read his Greek Testament, became a pietist and felt the urge toward philanthropy.

In consonance with the humanitarian spirit, which was coming over the country in place of selfish brutality, the rights and privileges of the individual man, irrespective of birth and belief, were beginning to be studied. In a few years' time the long overdue prison reforms would also begin to take shape, all sorts of restrictions and grievances would have to be removed, blatant injustice would have to be redressed. If we study the trend of history through long periods, we shall find that there are fashions of thought which spread universally—as far as transport permits—and then fade out. But the greatest movements in the world's story have been concerned with liberty in some shape or form—personal, political, religious. Liberty, being a possession so precious to every human person, perpetually inspires a yearning to express itself more adequately; so that every few generations we get some such happening as the Renaissance, Reformation or the American Independence. It was the latter which was more responsible for this new spirit in European affairs during the late eighteenth century than many of us quite appreciate.

Here was a gift from the New World to the Old; and it was accepted by Ireland, by England, as well as by France. It took a little while for these seeds of liberty to grow up, but we have already seen part of the harvest in Irish independence, and we shall presently observe the riotous crop which was maturing on French soil. In

England, where the ground was not favorable for exceptional cultivation, the yield was to be of a more restrained nature. There grew up not rebellion or revolution, so much as reform. But the surprising enthusiasm, by which so many able-minded men in England sympathized with the French Revolution at first, is explained by the Englishman's inordinate love of freedom on all occasions. If Wordsworth in his earlier years was carried off his feet by his admiration for France's great upheaval (only to suffer a strong reaction when he witnessed its later developments), he still expressed in his poetry that feeling for freedom and pity for the unfortunate. No wonder, then, that our ancestors regarded him as dangerously tainted with discontent at existing social organization.

Every man to his own particular division of labor and employment of his talents! While Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) was exhibiting this liberty influence by a reckless contempt for conventional formula, was likewise in the process of writing his famous *Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* and shortly afterwards heartily assisted with advice the leading French revolutionists, William Wilberforce was considering liberty in its regard to slaves. For as much as England since the days of Hawkins had been a notorious slave-monger, it was fitting that she should make reparation in this her mood for reform. Let it be understood that this particular adaptation of a general principle—emancipation—was just now in the parliamentary air. Any one could pluck it for himself, and the Opposition were already toying with the idea. Both Fox and Burke were carefully considering it.

Pitt it was who advised Wilberforce to take up the matter of slave trade in the House of Commons. And while at Hollwood, standing by a certain tree in his

friend's park, Wilberforce made up his mind to accept this task. That was in 1787. His charm of manner, fine intellect, high principles and general popularity made him the most suitable parliamentary leader of philanthropists pledged to abolish this negation of freedom. But in the following January he was attacked by what was thought to be a fatal illness. He withdrew to Bath, and on his behalf Pitt moved a resolution in the House on May 9, 1788, committing it to deal with the subject next session. Resolutions were passed also in 1791 and 1804, but it was not until the year after Pitt's death that the Bill of Abolition became law.

We come now to a delicate matter, in which a great trial was made of Pitt's fortitude, and so great a strain was placed on his patience that he was on the verge of forsaking politics altogether. George III, with his narrow mind, his intriguing and cunning nature, his stubborn insincerity, his homely lack of dignity, his cheese-paring domestic meanness, his middle-class popularity and middle-grade intellect, had always been a little difficult for Pitt's purposeful personality to humor and shepherd. Now, however, the monarch had suddenly become impossible. George was one of those hearty fellows who reveled in the obvious and hated subtleties, ate well, slept well, tended toward corpulence, took a large amount of horse exercise, and a certain amount of the waters at Cheltenham. His wife Charlotte (of Mecklenburg-Strelitz) bore him no fewer than fifteen children, but he had to bear with a spouse who was as dull as she was respectable.

As far back as 1765, that is to say when he was aged twenty-seven, George had an attack of mental aberration, but it had passed. And now, following some biliousness, his mind was unhinged again. How much of this mad-

ness was due to infection of the gray matter in the brain, how much the insanities of these eighteenth-century eccentrics was traceable to the vice-begotten diseases of their forebears, need not here be discussed. On October 22, 1788, the King's physician, Sir George Baker, was considering his mental state, and on the twenty-fourth, Pitt had an audience with His Majesty. On the twenty-fifth, Pitt evidently thought him well enough to send a letter advising:* "there seems no absolute Necessity to say any thing in the despatches now to be sent, which c^d. finally commit this Country to the extent of going to War in support of Sweden, and that the instruction to Mr. Ewart will be framed on this idea."

On November third the King wrote him a letter, and two days afterwards Pitt from Downing Street sent another communication but through Sir George Baker, and franked, "to be delivered or not, as he finds proper."† In duty bound the Premier had to make his report on vital state matters, yet it was doubtful if the King would be able to comprehend. The illness might be but temporary, so Pitt merely wrote:

From an unwillingness to trouble your Majesty unnecessarily, Mr. Pitt delayed till today, expressing his sense of your Majesty's condescension and goodness in the commands with which he was honoured the day before yesterday.

He flatters himself that a continuance of quiet will in a short time remove the Remains of your Majesty's complaint.

Mr. Pitt will trespass no further on your Majesty's Time but to add that all the accounts lately received from the North are of the most favorable sort, there appearing no Probability of any extension of Hostilities, and

* "Chatham Papers," P. R. O.

† Ibid.

great Reason to expect that every thing may be quietly and satisfactorily settled by Negotiation during the Winter.

But on this selfsame day the King became delirious, and we find Pitt later on writing to the latter's cousin, William Wyndham Grenville, to say that "the account of last night is that the King's state thro' that day has been perfectly *maniacal.*"* On November twenty-ninth the patient had to be removed to Kew by his physician, and in the first week of December the royal physicians informed the Privy Council that the King's malady might last from six weeks to a couple of years.

This was no pleasant position for Pitt, and Fox's friends were repeating in the clubs the falsehood that the King had been insane for several months; that Pitt had concealed the truth for the purpose of governing without being controlled. But the Opposition, eager for office, really believed that their opportunity had now just about arrived. A tense situation ensued. On December tenth in the House of Commons Pitt brought up the physicians' report, and observed that steps must be taken for providing against the present position of affairs. He therefore moved for the appointment of a Committee who should look up precedents. Fox, however, declared that the Prince of Wales had the right to assume the royal reins of government. There was no need for precedents.

Pitt persisted, with true democratic accuracy, that this "right" did not belong to the heir apparent, but could be conferred only by Parliament. Burke assailed Pitt with the accusation of being "one of the Prince's competitors." For the fact was that the Premier was putting up a most difficult fight; by reason of his office he had a profound

* "Dropmore MSS." The italics are Pitt's.

duty toward the public interest, yet the claims of the Prince could not be ignored. There was a further complication in the fact that the latter with his debts, his debaucheries, his undesirable friends, his lies, his secret marriage, was neither popular with the people nor likely to have a good influence in governing the nation. Between Pitt and the Prince a kind of armed neutrality had existed for some years; from the moment that the King's eldest son should find it possible, Pitt would be dismissed and Fox would at last get the position coveted. Feeling grew to be bitter. While the Premier felt that the powers of the Prince should be limited, and that it was for the estates of the realm to say who should act for the King, George had become a violent lunatic and was at first placed under the care of incompetent doctors who could prescribe nothing better than a strait waistcoat. It was the persuasive treatment of Doctor Willis which succeeded more effectually.

When a big controversial problem arises, it is a typically British gesture of statesmanship to appoint a commission of able men from both sides. The national love of compromise, give-and-take, fair adjustment, is at once satisfied. At any rate it has for the time a quieting influence. Pitt was able to stem violent squabbling by appointing a committee, which included such distinguished men from both sides of the House as Burke, Wilberforce, Henry Dundas, Sheridan, W.W. Grenville and Windham. They presented their report on December twelfth, and again the discussion became vehement. Nowadays we should have read in the newspapers that this committee was pure "camouflage" and "eyewash." It had very little utility, but it had given Pitt time to think during the delay. And it is conceivable that, with his regard for what was strictly regular, he half believed

he was doing the only possible thing. Being possessed of a mind that had been trained on history, he not merely looked back to the Revolution of 1688—exactly a century ago—but saw other precedents which had escaped the committee's notice.

In thus contending for the principles of the Revolution, for the decisive right of Parliament and people, Pitt was battling strenuously yet with extreme anxiety. But his unflinching determination to pursue his honest conviction was in accordance with his fundamental character. If it be true that great men exhibit their greatness in big crises, then here was such a person. During these last few years he had occupied a unique position, and reveled in his successful reconstructive accomplishment. He had become an enlightened and sound dictator, rather than a mere Prime Minister. Around him he enjoyed the good will of merchants, bankers, manufacturers, farmers, shipowners and others who knew that he was generally right. But now it seemed as if he must retire from all this, forsake Downing Street and the House of Commons, and begin his barrister's career afresh. Could he afford it financially? The answer is that his private affairs had been so neglected that already he was seriously in debt. To have forfeited his official salary just now would have been a most serious embarrassment, and it would have needed some time before he could have collected enough briefs for his immediate expenses.

Therefore, Pitt stands out clearly as a full-sized man-of-courage. He was able to get the Regency Bill passed by two hundred and sixty-eight votes to two hundred and four. On December thirtieth he sent a letter to the Prince of Wales at Carlton House, submitting the proposed outlines of regency: the Prince should be empowered to exercise the royal authority, but the care of the King's

person and the management of the royal household should be in the Queen's hands. That this was a wise and prudent arrangement no sensible critic can deny. But on January second the Prince replied "that he sees, in the contents of that paper, a project for producing weakness, disorder, and insecurity in every branch of the administration of affairs." He accepted, but with bad grace, the slight restrictions.

No two characters could be more diverse than those of Pitt and the Prince; few men have ever had a smaller regard for each other. That the former should have outwitted the latter, could not fail to create disappointment and bitter enmity. But Pitt's attitude was fortunate. In 1785, just three years ago, on December twenty-first, the Prince had married at a house in Park Lane a Mrs. Fitzherbert. Anne Smythe was the daughter of Mr. Walter Smythe, who had a place in Hampshire. In course of time Miss Smythe married Mr. Edward Weld, of Lulworth Castle, Dorsetshire. After his death the widow married Mr. Thomas Fitzherbert, of Swinnerton, Staffordshire; but he died also. Mrs. Fitzherbert was left well provided for, she was most accomplished, moved in the best society and was much admired.

When she was twenty-nine and still very handsome, she became acquainted with the Prince of Wales who fell madly in love with her. He was twenty-three and deadly in earnest. But Mrs. Fitzherbert was not of the royal blood, and she happened to be a Roman Catholic. Now, according to the Royal Marriage Act, all the descendants of George II were forbidden to marry without consent of the reigning sovereign, and by the Bill of Rights, if any English King or Queen should marry a Roman Catholic, their subjects should be absolved of their allegiance.

Thus, in effect, the Prince had forfeited his right to the Crown.

At first Mrs. Fitzherbert declined the Prince's offer of marriage. He was a mean contemptible fellow, who caused himself one day to be bled and gave an appearance of having attempted suicide. He sent some of his friends to Mrs. Fitzherbert, and she came. She allowed herself to be engaged with a ring, but afterwards repented of this and went abroad. Finally, however, the marriage took place as mentioned, before a clerk in Holy Orders of the Church of England. It was illegal, but valid, and there had been two witnesses present. This secret but canonical marriage was recognized by the Pope, although no fewer than twice was it denied in the House of Commons. Fox even wrote to the Prince, who lyingly replied that there were not, and never were, any grounds for such reports. Ten days later the wedding took place.

Mrs. Fitzherbert was a lady who hated publicity and duplicity, but, in order to establish her honor in the eyes of posterity, she collected the various documentary proofs of her marriage and some years before her death deposited these in Coutts' Bank. She also dictated a short narrative of her life to her cousin, Lord Stourton, with the wish that this should be published after her death; but Stourton died without being able to obtain the essential bank documents. His brother, the Honorable Charles Langdale, was also refused access to these papers. During the late nineteenth century numerous other applications were made, but the papers were never allowed to be revealed.

It was not till Edward VII allowed Mr. W. H. Wilkins to inspect and publish the papers that the whole matter was cleared up, freeing the lady of all base imputations, showing the Prince to be the consummate deceiver of Fox and the whole nation. These documents are no

MRS. FITZHERBERT

From a print of 1792.

THE PRINCE OF WALES

(afterwards George IV) with Caroline of Brunswick.

longer in the bank, but in the archives of Windsor Castle. The fact that the Prince lived openly with Mrs. Fitzherbert, and went through a form of marriage with Caroline of Brunswick in 1795, is too well known to be stressed.

Before Pitt's duty was done it was necessary for various resolutions to be passed as to the details of regency. On the last day of 1788 he sat down in the afternoon at half past two and wrote from Downing Street to Queen Charlotte as follows:

Mr. Pitt humbly presumes to entreat Her Majesty's Permission most respectfully to submit the Heads of the Plan which Her Majesty's Confidential Servants think it their duty to propose to Parliament for the Administration of the Government during the present emergency. . . . [He then referred to] The care of His Majesty's Royal Person, which important Trust cannot with Propriety or to the General Satisfaction be executed under any Direction but that of Her Majesty.*

A portrait of Pitt painted about this time shows a man in his thirtieth year, with eager wide-awake eyes, an energetic alertness but an expression highly indicative of his independent spirit. His fine forehead, his clear and sonorous voice (which so well he knew how to modulate), his intuitive quickness, his retentive memory, his readiness for apposite quotations from some classical authority, gave him a distinctive individuality. But he was playing a lonely part, as every man rigidly faithful to duty is destined to find himself. His popularity was with those whom to-day we should designate the big-business men. What however was thought of him at Court we well know from Fanny Burney. Seeing that she was so intimately associated with Queen Charlotte, we may assume

* "Chatham Papers."

that the latter's keeper-of-the-robes reflected the royal gossip.

"A melancholy day; news bad both at home and abroad," wrote this diarist who met all the people worth knowing. "At home the dear unhappy king still worse; abroad new examinations voted of the physicians. Good heavens! what an insult does this seem from Parliamentary power, to investigate and bring forth to the world every circumstance of such a malady as is ever held sacred to secrecy in the most private families! How indignant we all feel here, no words can say." As to the Regency Bill she "shuddered to hear it named."

But Pitt went on with his delicate duty, and the people of England during January, 1789, were infatuated* with him. He was to them a demigod. He appealed to them not merely because he gave them better trade, but because he could be relied on to give them a square deal in government. And this surprising example of an incorruptible politician was to have no small effect in uplifting the existing moral code. He hated heartily back-stairs scandal and all the subterranean currents which were spreading. Pitt the pilot was having no easy time, inasmuch as these currents were so diverse. For the Hastings affair was still sub-judice, and Queen Charlotte (the strictly virtuous mother of an immoral son, the severe consort who had excluded frail beauties from the English Court) not merely was a violent admirer and partizan of India's former Governor-General, but tolerated the latter's wife. Pitt having in the clearest terms shown his disapproval of Hastings, was not likely to win much popularity in the royal household amid the present unpleasant predicament.

Admiring his pluck, knowing also that he was pe-

* "Charlemont MSS."

cuniarily embarrassed, the merchants and bankers of London's city offered Pitt a present of one hundred thousand pounds. It was done with all tact and privacy through Sir Robert Preston and Mr. Rose. It was promised that the names of the subscribers should never be made known, but Pitt was adamant in his refusal. "No consideration on earth shall ever induce me to accept it" was what he said and meant. In a later chapter it will be convenient to examine more closely the reason for the chaotic condition in Pitt's private finance. It is sufficient for the present to state that his entire wealth consisted of ten thousand pounds left by his father, three thousand bequeathed by the Duke of Rutland, besides his official salary amounting to about ten thousand pounds a year. But against this must be reckoned the purchase and extension of Hollwood, in addition to the fact that this extremely busy young bachelor was so taken up with the country's financial and general affairs as to leave him little opportunity for domestic details. His tastes were not extravagant, but they were not simple. His entertaining, as Prime Minister, with establishments at Downing Street and Hollwood, ran away with large sums. And, moreover, we know from Tomline that Pitt was being robbed by his servants. That he should have declined the handsome present from the city was both natural and inevitable. However regrettable it was that he should be awkwardly placed, no other course for a proud and upright Pitt was possible. As he himself remarked, it would in the future be impracticable to discuss official matters with men who had given him money.

On January 16, 1789, he informed the House of Commons that the unanimous opinion of the King's physicians was "that his Majesty's recovery was more probable than the contrary," yet "it was impossible to ascertain when

that so much wished-for event might take place." Further progress was made in getting the House to pass these Regency resolutions, and on February fifth the Commons had completed their task. The matter then went to the House of Lords, but before they had time to give their approval, George III, thanks in part to the skill of Doctor Willis, was now—from February nineteenth—practically recovered, so that on the tenth of March he was able to resume his regal authority. It was a dramatic and sudden relief from national gloom, a happy escape out of an awkward dilemma. When the people of London lit up their streets for joy that the King's illness was ended, there was a spontaneous enthusiasm comparable only to that November night of 1918, when the lights of London after months of war gloom were again permitted. The public thanksgiving in St. Paul's Cathedral on April 23, 1789, completed for Pitt a period which had been fraught with no little anxiety.

He had emerged, however, a well-tried statesman, whose cool courageous cleverness could be relied on to steer the ship through more intricate navigation. Fox and friends were once more disappointed and largely distrusted: their violence had again won them more enemies than friends. Good fortune had followed Pitt's careful pilotage, and when the King that June went to stay at Weymouth it was symbolical that at least one danger was passed. From Gloucester Lodge George was able to look out over the esplanade with an uninterrupted view of the sea and Dorset cliffs which for generations had been so familiar to the family of Pitts. And while "Farmer" George, as they nicknamed him in some parts of England, was enjoying the sunshine and companionship of his Queen and Princesses, sailing in the bay, bathing from the beach, and riding over the country on his horse, the Prime

Minister was concerning himself with the nation's future.

In this same June, Pitt had been able to get his friend of boyhood days, Henry Addington, made Speaker of the House of Commons. So England in Pitt, Addington and Wilberforce possessed a trio of young able men making their names to be memorable. It was in this year that Pitt's taxes which fell on shopkeepers had to be dropped, so that probate and legacy duties took the place; and the fact must be not forgotten that in spite of industrial progress England still depended to a considerable extent on her harvests. The latter from 1789 to 1792 were very bad; yet such had been the benefits of Pitt's finance that in the last mentioned year he was able to reduce taxation, for the advantage of the poor and lower middle-classes especially. All the anxieties of recent times had begun to have their effect on Pitt's thirty-year-old body, and the lack of exercise, together with the enjoyment of too much port, now must inevitably begin to tell on a constitution that had never been strong. When we bear in mind the perpetual suspense caused by Fox's strong Opposition, the tremendous amount of administrative detailed work caused by financial reformation, the strain of the Regency proceedings, and the worry arising from his own "honorable poverty," it is scarcely wondrous that during 1789 Pitt was seized with the first of those bad gout attacks which were to follow after periods of acute anxiety. Here was the first warning that even youth must pay the price of excessive mental and nervous strain.

It is impossible to examine the holograph letters sent by George III to Pitt and not perceive that, with all his trying ways, the King had a deep respect for his Premier. These manuscripts are interesting as indicative, by their calligraphy, of the royal patient's mental condition. The monarch would send on the top of a four-page sheet

of plain note-paper a strictly official and curt command thus:

Mr. Pitt, I desire you will come here immediately.
G. R.

Queen's House
March 20, 1783.

This letter was then folded, sealed with red wax, and addressed to "William Pitt, Esq."

Or the message would be at another time:

Mr. Pitt is desired to come here in his Morning Dress as soon as convenient to Him.

Now when Pitt saw the King on October twenty-fourth—a few days before the latter became "maniacal" —the occasion was a levee, and the Minister was alarmed at his master's physical awkwardness. George, though he realized and admitted that he was becoming insane, was trying to conceal his mental condition by pretending that his limbs were the seat of trouble. Still, in doing this bit of deceit for a wise reason, he had not failed to notice that Pitt was pained. Thus on the next day the King wrote from Kew:

Mr. Pitt really seemed distressed at seeing my bodily stiffness yesterday which I alone exhibited to stop further lies and any fall of the stocks.

He was mindful of Pitt even on November third, just as the madness developed into a crisis. On that day George must needs write from Windsor:

The King thinks it must give Mr. Pitt pleasure to receive a line from Him this will convince him the King

can sign Warrants without inconvenience therefore [this last word is ink-smeared as if the royal mouth had slobbered, or the eye had dropped a tear] He desires any that are ready may be sent.

(The punctuation is exactly reproduced.)

Still not forgetful of how much he owed to Pitt, the King immediately at his recovery wrote from Kew on February twenty-third, 1789, in a less sprawly hand:

It is with infinite satisfaction I renew my correspondence with Mr. Pitt by acquainting him with my having seen the Prince of Wales and my second Son; care was taken that the Conversation should be general and cordial. . . . I feel the warmest gratitude for the support and anxiety shewn by the Nation at large during my tedious illness. . . . I am anxious to see Mr. Pitt any hour that may suit him tomorrow morning, as his constant attachment to my interest and that of the Public which are inseperarable [*sic*] must ever place him in the most advantageous light.

G. R.*

It is certain that this gratitude was genuine and well-founded. For, a few months later, on May seventeenth, of the following year, he was writing to Pitt in regard to Doctor Willis having a pension. In this letter reference was made also to the Tellership of the Exchequer having become vacant by the death of Lord Hardwicke, and the King, thinking of his own death and remembering that Pitt was always obtaining honors and sinecures for other people, wrote of this remunerative post:

Had Mr. Pitt proposed some means of rendering it of utility to himself it would have been pleasing to Me, as I do not feel easy at not having had an opportunity of

* "Chatham Papers," P. R. O.

securing a provision for him in case of my paying that tribute to which every one is sooner or later subject.

But it was characteristic of Pitt's proud poverty and sublime political honesty that he would accept nothing save his bare salary. Pitt's loyalty and respect for His Majesty were always something wonderfully real; but not even these were more cogent than a strict self-denial. Let others reap rewards and distinctions; for him it was enough to enjoy the burden and privilege of guiding Parliament. Thus, when during that same year George III offered Pitt that highest order of English knighthood, the Garter, and in the royal letter of December 12, 1790, remarked that this honor was intended "as a public testimony of my approbation," Pitt did not hesitate to refuse. But the King, far from being offended, asserted that it had been declined "in so handsome a manner that I can not help expressing my sensibility." It was Pitt's wish that the Garter should, instead, be conferred on his brother, Lord Chatham. To this the King agreed in these words: "I with pleasure shall to-morrow give this public testimony of approbation which will be understood as meant to the whole family."

Chapter XII

PITT AND DIPLOMACY

The time was now at hand when Pitt's skill in foreign negotiations was to be tested with severity; and the first trial was caused through a comparatively small incident. For off the west side of what we nowadays call Vancouver lies Nootka Island, and Nootka Sound which separates it from Vancouver Island is about ten miles across.

In the spring of 1789 the British ship *Iphigenia* was anchored in this Sound, since such vessels were accustomed to arrive here for the purpose of obtaining wood as well as drinking water. They used to trade with the local copper-colored American Indians, who brought them plenty of fresh salmon, and a British settlement here grew up collecting furs. Now Spain still regarded this as part of her traditional sphere. Two Spanish warships presently seized *Iphigenia,* took the crew prisoners, hauled down the British flag at the settlement, and gave the men bad treatment. This was a serious insult, and Pitt insisted that Spain should make reparation.

Pitt's cleverness lay in the secret efficiency with which he went about this affair. To Downing Street each month seemed to suggest war as the only way out, and he surprised every one by exhibiting sudden readiness. The negotiations between Britain and Spain had dragged on, till May, 1790, found Pitt with the necessary money for war voted by Parliament and the fleet prepared. Before all things Pitt was a man of peace. He had the same horror of hostilities that a scholar has of riotous behavior outside his study window. Pitt's life and letters show him always willing to attain the furthest limit of endurance to prevent actual fighting. At the same time, however, he was not to be fooled. When once he

realized that a conciliatory attitude was waste of time, he would stiffen his lip and pursue a firm and relentless policy to its logical end. "I hate war, but my country has war-ships. Be cautious." That rather summed up his foreign rhetoric.

The net result was that Spain did withdraw from a dangerous situation, and that an honorable agreement was signed on October twenty-eighth of that same year. The further sequel was that British prestige abroad soared like a rocket; the name of Pitt received additional luster. The sum of three million, one hundred and thirty-three thousand pounds had been spent in fitting out ships; but while never a gun was fired, the victory had been won because at the back of Pitt's diplomacy was a "fleet in being." Spain, moreover, had been disappointed that France should have remained neutral during this tension. Altogether a big potential crisis vanished into mist.

But it was followed by another possible danger, and we see Pitt using the same technique though with a different result. Across the North Sea and Baltic that notorious, insatiate harlot, Catherine II, was Empress of Russia. During the last thirty years she had ruled that country, and dismissed a succession of lovers with the same ruthlessness. On the other hand this clever woman, fifty years Pitt's senior, had an exceptional driving force, consummate organizing ability, keen political insight. Hard as the Baltic ice, but as passionate as any Latin adventuress, Catherine fed her intellect from sound books and especially history. The reform movement which was spreading over Europe reached her mind and turned her into a modernist. She, Pitt like, amended taxation. She instituted banks, introduced potatoes into Russia, induced German colonists to settle in the land, reorganized the Army, founded a college of surgeons, started hospitals,

and waged war with Turkey besides profiting from a division of Poland.

But Pitt, regarding the policy of Catherine and her ally, Austria, against the Turks, felt uneasy. This German-born woman, daughter of a Prussian field-marshal, who had got rid of her husband through an act of murder while Pitt still toddled in the Hayes nursery, was upsetting Pitt's sense of political esthetics. She was endangering the balance of power; she must be stopped. His Triple Alliance had in 1788 saved the independence of Sweden; two years later it was able to detach Austria from Russia and make an armistice with Turkey. The all-ambitious, uncheckable Catherine was, however, bent on having a naval base for the Black Sea: in 1788 Otchakow, at the entrance to the Dnieper, she had obtained from the Turks at the cost of heavy bloodshed. But Pitt, with Prussia, was insistent that Otchakow should be given back. Catherine showed no such intention.

The British Prime Minister therefore prepared the British fleet, and also prepared an ultimatum which was duly despatched. To defray the expenses of adding "weight" to the representations being made for bringing about peace between Russia and Turkey, Pitt now moved an address in the Commons on March 28, 1791; and by two hundred and twenty-eight to one hundred and thirty-five votes got what he wanted. But he had outrun the real national feeling on the matter; he had to learn that a large mass of votes was always given on his side because of his dominant personality, and not arising through members' own independent reasoning. Furthermore, Parliament was still by no means fully representative of the country's mind and will. The truth was that the average constituent wanted nothing so little as war. British trade was so prosperous, the shipowners of the east coast doing

business up the Baltic were faring so well, and the costly American War was still so vividly remembered, that this threat to Russia must be withdrawn. So in the end public opinion compelled Pitt to yield while yet there was a chance.

He had hoped to have overawed Catherine by the display of Prussian armies and British squadrons; but he was defeated by a woman who, to ordinary feminine artfulness, had added vast political experience. Still, it was when he realized he himself was actually unsupported as to his policy, that Pitt had to send a messenger and overtake the ultimatum. The incident closed, there was no war, the merchants and shipowners breathed freely, but the Triple Alliance had suffered a shock and weakened. In others words Pitt's main foreign plan had been badly injured. The question arises why was it that Pitt had gone ahead of popular feeling? Why was he compelled to suffer this bitter personal humiliation, and to injure his nation in the eyes of the world? For there is no more foolish spectacle than a valiant threat unaccompanied by execution. Why did he allow himself to be rash?

The answer is simple. Naturally proud himself, he was determined to uphold his country's dignity and not to endure this Russian Empress's grandiose extensions without protest. He was committed to the balance of power and the *status quo* doctrine. Russia threatened this; therefore she must be opposed by force. But Pitt was an instance of an extremely logical man living his bulk-headed bachelor life, self-enclosed in his study, unapproachable by all except the fewest friends, and generally out of touch with common humanity. His brain was superior to the average person's, his determination and self-reliance enabled him to maintain a perpetual barrier;

WILLIAM PITT

From a mezzotint of 1794.

so that, in short, by a kind of intellectual domination and self-enclosure, Pitt was a Premier apart from his Parliament and people. He suggests, indeed, an intellectual kinship with ex-President Woodrow Wilson.

It was the instance of a clever man so concentrated in his attention to the main issue that he could observe nothing else. His mode of life was so direct, sincere, frank, clear and precise, that there was not room for special circumstances to moderate what seemed to him the only possible method. Herein was a defect, a lack of flexibility, which could have been remedied had there been a little warmer blood in his veins, a more humanizing spirit in his make-up. On the other hand Britain happened to be passing through an epoch when she might have suffered much worse things than a cold, unemotional, upright, consistent Dictator. His budget for 1790 proved that his domestic governing had not been far wrong; already was British prosperity something far greater than in the days preceding the American War.

Notwithstanding his passion for reforms in finance and commerce (and the thwarted desire for the reform of Parliament itself), Pitt was never a revolutionist. His intellectual training both at home and Cambridge had set its seal on his being a constitutionalist all the time.

His respect for fundamental principles was deeply ingrained: for the Sovereign, the State, the peerage, his regard was rivaled only by his reverence of the classics. Away back in the unenlightened days of 1661 Parliament had imposed a civil disability on the Puritans by passing the Corporation Act, which excluded all Nonconformists from municipal office. Twelve years later had come the Test Act, which compelled all holders of civil, naval and military office to receive Holy Communion

according to the Church of England rites, and make a declaration against Transubstantiation.

And now, in this late eighteenth century, when the spirit of liberty and toleration was beginning to show itself, it might have been expected that these two iniquitous statutes could well be removed. On March 2, 1790, Fox introduced his motion for repealing the Corporation and Test Acts. Notwithstanding his long and eloquent speech, the motion was negatived by two hundred and ninety-four votes to one hundred and five. Pitt, a man of sound morals but in no sense of the word religious, took the line that these two laws acted as a bulwark to the Church "so intimately connected with the State." He told the House that he considered therefore they should not be relinquished. "To have no test of any kind is contrary to the genius and spirit of monarchy."

If it is surprising to find Pitt so plainly unfair to Non-conformist and Roman Catholic alike, we must not forget the Erastianism of this period. George III was quite roused by this Commons incident, so next morning at eight o'clock sat down in his room at Windsor Castle, and wrote the following message:

This instant I have had the pleasure of receiving Mr. Pitt's note with the most welcome news of Mr. Fox's motion on the Corporation and Test Acts having been rejected by 294 against 105.

. . . I should hope Parliament will not be again troubled with this most improper business.

G. R.*

A few weeks later Parliament, which had already lasted six years was (in accordance with the Septennial Act of 1716 which prevented any length greater than

* "Chatham Papers."

seven years), now dissolved. Pitt, however, came back with an increased majority at the General Election, and on June 18, 1790, the King did not hesitate to send Pitt a letter of congratulation: "I am glad the contest at Cambridge has decided by so large a majority which will I trust prevent the Peace of the University being in future disturbed."* In November Parliament reassembled and the session lasted till June, 1791, but then came the time to get rid of Lord Thurlow. Edward Thurlow had been made Solicitor-General in 1770, and Lord Chancellor eight years later. In Pitt's first Administration Thurlow had again been made Lord Chancellor at the end of 1783. But he was a tricky, intriguing, uncertain kind of colleague to have, and lately Pitt had found this old man's temper, as well as his thwarting tactics, unbearable. Finally it came to this—as Pitt plainly submitted to George III—either Thurlow or Pitt must leave His Majesty's service: it was impossible for both to remain.

This placed the King in an awkward dilemma; he wrote to Henry Dundas on May 15, 1792, that, "I trust He will follow up the idea of showing Mr. Pitt He has a real victory over the Chancellor if he keeps his temper and that my Service requires his resisting any warmth."† Next day Pitt sent the following letter to Lord Thurlow from Downing Street:

My Lord,

I think it right to take the earliest opportunity of acquainting your Lordship, that being convinced of the impossibility of His Majesty's Service being any longer carried on to advantage while your Lordship and myself both remain in our present situations, I have felt

* Ibid.

† Ibid.

it my duty to submit that opinion to His Majesty, humbly requesting His Majesty's determination thereupon.

I have the honor to be &c.

W. PITT.*

Inasmuch as Pitt was the more valuable of the two, George had no hesitation in getting rid of Thurlow, who accordingly found himself dismissed. The King knew too well that Pitt was the right man in the right job, and whenever the monarch paid his brief sojourns away from home it had been made obvious that trade had never been so good for years. The value of exports, since Pitt's first Ministry was formed at the end of 1783, had risen by several million pounds sterling; and the East India Company was now importing about five times the amount of tea, which enabled the Customs to profit accordingly. Thus it was that in 1792 Pitt was able to repeal two hundred and twenty-three thousand pounds' worth of taxes. He looked forward to fifteen years of peace and increasing prosperity, and felt so sure of the former that he reduced the vote for the number of required seamen by two thousand.

July of that year found him staying with his mother down at Burton Pynsent; and now at last George III found an opportunity of repaying the Premier for all his noble work. The King was aware of the latter's private financial condition, and suddenly circumstances occurred releasing a well remunerated sinecure together with residence by the sea. So we find the King writing from Windsor Castle on the sixth of August, 1792, to Pitt in Somerset in the following pleasant terms:

Having this morning received the Account of the death of the Earl of Guilford, I take the first opportunity

* "Chatham Papers."

of acquainting Mr. Pitt that the Wardenship of the Cinque Ports is an office for which I will not receive any Recommendations, having positively resolved to confer it on Him, as a mark of that regard which his eminent services have deserved from me; I am so bent on this that I shall seriously be offended at any attempt to decline.*

The Cinque Ports are wrapped up in the history of England's early seafaring, with their special privileges and close connection in developing a marine instinct for this country. The original five were Hastings, Romney, Hythe, Dover and Sandwich; and the wardenship has in recent times been held by distinguished Englishmen such as the late Lord Brassey. The official residence is Walmer Castle, which was built by Henry VIII and is delightfully placed amid the most bracing part of Kent looking out two miles south of Deal, across the Dover Straits to the French coast. Here then would be a capital country place, where Pitt could find rest and quietness from his parliamentary and administrative duties. It was not too far from London, and (what was most important) it carried with it a salary of three thousand a year.

Very wisely and considerately had the King made it a definite command that Pitt should accept this office, and this left the latter with no option. Few residences possess a more interesting view of shipping. To-day there is a steady procession of liners, tramp steamers, coasters, motor craft, sailing barges, topsail schooners, ketches, passing up and down, bound to or from London's river, or the North Sea. But in the eighteenth century there would rarely be a day when some fine old East Indiaman or two were not in the Downs waiting for a fair wind

* Ibid.

down-Channel, or temporarily anchoring after arrival from the Orient. Trim men-o'-war, with yards and square canvas, would come along with the tide and bring up here, so that one of the grandest sights in the world's marine history was in the days of hemp and oak when a whole fleet would majestically weigh anchor in company. At this date the British Navy consisted of three hundred and sixty-six vessels, of which seven were first-rates, twenty-four second-rates, and a hundred and nineteen third-rates.

Pitt proceeded this summer to Walmer and soon began entertaining his friends. There survives an interesting letter written by the Earl of Mornington to Lord Grenville. William Wyndham Grenville who was the same age as Pitt and his cousin, had also married a Pitt.* A very proud person, who owed all his promotion to his cousin, Grenville was lacking in the capacity for handling men, and in 1797 Pitt was on the point of severing all friendship with him. But in 1792, of which we are speaking, Pitt had a few months previously obtained for him the Secretaryship for Foreign Affairs, which he was to hold till Pitt went out of office in 1801.

Mornington had been over to Walmer from Ramsgate and on October twenty-fourth informs Grenville:

> On Monday I dined at Walmer, and was delighted with the situation; about a hundred sail of ships were lying in the Downs, and the day was quite clear. . . . I told Pitt that matrimony had made three very important changes in you, which could not but affect your old friends. 1st., a brown lapelled coat instead of the eternal blue single-breasted; 2nd., strings in your shoes; 3rd., a very good perfume in your hair.†

* Grenville married Ann, daughter of Thomas Pitt, first Lord Camelford. It was in November, 1790, that Grenville was raised to the peerage.

† "Dropmore MSS."

During the ensuing years Walmer was to play an important part in Pitt's life, and hither would come as his guests statesmen, bishops, relatives and others. Indeed, some of the most momentous decisions of his career resulted from quiet meditation in this castle. In the height of the invasion scare presently no part of the English coast was more likely to see the landing of a French army than the Deal beach. For it was at some point between Walmer and Deal that in August B.C. 55 Cæsar had beached his transports and landed his soldiers.

We come now to trace the effect on Pitt caused by that cataclysm which we know as the French Revolution. It was, so to say, the extreme and riotous expression of the new liberty movement which had begun in North America, passed through Ireland, the continent of Europe and even to Russia.

Catherine, however, was too firmly enthroned to suffer such convulsive developments as were seen in France, where the abuses of privilege had become no longer tolerable. Rousseau and the American colonists had, indirectly, stirred up the necessary enthusiasm for revolt, though it was the unreformed finance of France which precipitated the crisis. That Britain had got through her monetary troubles and, thanks to Pitt plus the seafaring instinct, was now well organized for trade expansion, rather irritated the French position. True, they had their financial expert in Jacques Necker (1732-1804). He had indeed introduced reforms, but in matters of finance he chiefly failed. Necker has been called the Pitt of France, but he lacked the Englishman's successful ability as well as his essential honesty. Necker was the man who presented on paper a balance which in reality was non-existent; who was so disappointing a statesman that he had no policy or program on the eve

of the Revolution to offer the Estates General. A Pitt might have saved the French situation and entirely changed the progress of history.

As Pitt in Downing Street during the summer of this memorable 1789 contemplated what was happening across the Channel, he was not in the least perturbed. And if the Prime Minister was not moved, then what Englishman need be? The attitude of Pitt and people was summarized something as follows: France is reforming herself, as we have just done. She is making rather a noise about it, but this is merely a family squabble, and we have neither the right nor the intention to meddle with our neighbours concerning their domestic differences. Let us mind our own business.

But this attitude was fundamentally wrong; it failed to appreciate that you can not altogether prevent the influence of a great movement from spreading in some shape to the minds, the hearts, the emotions of fellow human beings in other countries. That means, in turn, certain mental decisions are bound to be resolved on definite action. Thus into the England which Pitt had snatched out of bankruptcy and exhaustion after the American War, the England which was profiting by its reforms, and prospering by its improved prestige, there came those insidious agents spreading unsettling doctrines from revolutionary France. Soon there would follow seditious publications, written to disaffect men of the Navy and Army. There would be rioting to follow, and unless strong suppressive measures were taken immediately Britain might be confronted with a serious situation herself. This is exactly what happened in England during 1792 and 1793 especially; just as Russian Bolshevik propaganda in the third decade of the twentieth century here created a crisis of no mean importance. History,

in truth, is but a mirror showing different people doing the same things in cycles of time.

Now, in proportion as Pitt perceived the French Revolutionary spirit spreading in London and the provinces, so his policy gradually became transformed from reformation to repression, from reconstruction to reaction, from liberty to restraint. And be it stated, this repression was, consequent on French excesses, destined to reach other countries. By the year 1790 matters were not yet critical, but in such sort as to require watching. It was now that Pitt, the reformer, had the duty of refusing Flood's motion for parliamentary reform; the present was an inopportune time to think of extending popular power. In this year also, it will be remembered, were proceeding those delicate negotiations with Spain over the Nootka affair.

There is among the "Chatham Papers" preserved in the Public Records Office the draft of a most interesting letter, which shows that in the autumn of this year, and before the convention had been honorably fixed up, Pitt was filled with serious anxiety lest Spain with France should join hands and war against Britain. It is a long epistle of some ten and a half pages, marked "Private," sent from Downing Street in October, 1790, by Pitt to "H. Elliot Esq." At this date Elliot (or Eliot) was aged thirty-eight. He was a brother of Lady Auckland (whose diplomatic husband we have already mentioned), of whom we shall speak in another chapter. Elliot had received part of his education in a Paris school, where he had become friends with that historic personage Gabriel Honoré Riquetti, Comte de Mirabeau, who was three years older than himself. Hugh Elliot had afterwards entered the British diplomatic service, for nine years was Ambassador at Copenhagen and had distinguished

himself in keeping Denmark friendly toward England, thus fulfilling Pitt's policy of limiting Russia's increasing Baltic power. Now, Pitt foresaw that, Mirabeau being the most prominent person in the Estates General, it would be wise to recall Elliot from Copenhagen and send him to Paris. This was done in 1790, and, unofficially but none the less definitely with a mission, Pitt despatched him to win over Mirabeau as Britain's friend.

We have here an example of the limits which Pitt permitted himself, rather than allow Britain to be involved in war. In plain language Elliot was sent with money to poverty-stricken France there to employ every ascendency, from schoolboy friendship to hard cash, in staving off war. If Pitt is to be criticized for this line of conduct, then he is in the same category as other British Ministers have found themselves, the last Great War of 1914-18 not excepted. Pitt—and there are many who will agree with him—believed that the judicious use of ready money was in certain cases permissibly and justifiably cheaper than bloodshed, ships-of-the-line and heavy taxation.

When he had received Elliot's report from France, it was therefore a relief for Pitt to be able to send Elliot this letter:

Dear Sir,

I am extremely glad to find by your Letter that you have succeeded so well in opening a confidential Intercourse with the Leaders of what appears to be the Ruling Party in France. Great Advantages may perhaps be derived from the Circumstance in the present critical situation. I imagine indeed from your account that we can hardly hope, in case war should take place with Spain and should last for any Time, that France will not ultimately take part in It.

But I think there seems to be a reasonable Prospect

that the Persons with whom you communicate may be brought to make such Representations to the Spanish Court even if a Rupture should have taken place, as may lead to a speedy Restoration of Peace by a settlement of the Points in dispute conformable to the Principles on which We have hitherto insisted. . . ."

With regard to the steps which should be taken for bringing Spain to accede to the British terms, Pitt emphasized that "Great Care must be taken that the French shall not appear as *Mediators* still less as *Arbitrators*." "We are," Pitt hesitates not to add, "sincerely desirous of preserving Peace."

But while Pitt was able to preserve peace with Spain, matters began to focus themselves otherwise in regard to France. If he still failed to appreciate the future trend of the French Revolution, at least one who was thirty years older saw in it such a rebellion against law and order as to threaten the entire European political system. At the end of this year (1790) Edmund Burke published his *Reflections on the Revolution in France,* and this had such a success that thirty thousand copies—a marvelous number for those days—were soon sold. It was this book which opened the eyes and electrified the imaginations of peaceful England; the upper and middle classes were filled with fear of a similar catastrophe occurring in their country. They now looked with horror on the dangers of democracy, and foresaw that war with France must inevitably arrive.

Pitt was still sitting tight and refusing to be carried away by this clamor for suspending all intercourses with France. Next year, however, died Mirabeau, the ablest personality among moderate-minded Frenchmen; and then in 1792 events began to happen with quickening pace. A painful division had been caused in the Whig

party by Burke's writings, and his old friendship with Fox was broken off. Burke's feeling against the Revolution abroad became increasingly violent, while the more liberal members of the Opposition formed the "Society of the Friends of the People." Fox, however, not being fascinated by parliamentary reform, stood aloof from the latter.

On the second of April Pitt delivered himself of a speech pleading for the abolition of slavery, and on the last day of this month he opposed Mr. Grey's expressed intention of introducing the question of parliamentary reform in the following year on the ground that the time was still not opportune. April thirtieth, then, is the line of demarcation between Pitt, the reformer, and Pitt, the represser. He was beginning to wake up to the rapid and dangerous growth of Radical opinion in England resulting from events across the Channel. "The Corresponding Society," founded in the previous year, was enrolling many artizan members, and Thomas Paine had obtained an immense circulation of his book, *The Rights of Man,* which was a reply to Burke.

Paine was a man of fifty-five, who was an extreme champion of liberty. He was not content merely to have been over to America and encouraged the colonial revolution, but returned to England and became involved in seditious libel. There was a real alarm in the country by now, that all this immoderate talk and publication would lead up to an English revolution. Pitt therefore acted firmly. On May twenty-first he was able to get a royal proclamation against "divers wicked and seditious writings"; Paine was tried and found guilty of the latter, but fled to France. As not infrequently happens with extreme revolutionists, his enthusiasm included an attack on Christianity, which he published two years later in *The Age of Reason.*

But the crisis of the French Revolution began with August 10, 1792, when Louis XVI was deposed. There was no longer a French Court for the British Ambassador; relations had thus collapsed. But the September massacres, following so closely the fall of monarchy, roused the British nation to the greatest anger. In November the French Republic issued its Edict of Fraternity, inviting other nations to follow the French example and assuring aid to all who did so. Nor was this all. They had annexed Savoy, threatened Holland, opened the Scheldt and thus defied the existing Treaty.

Realizing that Britain was bound by the undertaking of 1788 to maintain Dutch independence, Pitt could see the war clouds fast gathering. All these months he had persevered in his attempt to preserve peace, and he had maintained for his country a strict neutrality. But the progress of the Revolution, the growth of seditious propaganda, and the violation of a solemn Treaty, now had brought patience to the point of rupture. So part of the militia was called out, and when Parliament assembled on December thirteenth the King's speech called attention to the efforts being made for subverting the Constitution and social order.

The time had now come for facing the international facts fully. It was one thing for the French to express the spirit of reform in their own way; it was entirely another matter when they tried interfering with British internal government, fomenting insurrection, and proselytizing. Furthermore, since France had clearly shown herself determined on aggrandizement, resolved to cause an upheaval in every country she could annex, there was no further need for delay in dealing with her. If she was encouraging all nations to rise against their respective rulers, this rebellious incitement was indeed a cause

for war. She was setting out to impose her will and instruction on the rest of the world. "All men," Pitt interpreted the threat in his own words, "must learn from the mouth of their cannon the propagation of their system in every part of the world." In spreading revolution to every country, the French "would organize every country by a disorganizing principle."

It was on February 1, 1793, that the King's message of January twenty-eighth was read to the House of Commons. "In the present situation of affairs," it ran, "his Majesty thinks it indispensably necessary to make a further augmentation of his forces by sea and land . . . for maintaining the security and rights of his own dominions; for supporting his allies; and for opposing views of aggrandizement and ambition on the part of France." Pitt then rose and made one of the best speeches in his life, exposing in masterly manner the provocation which the British Government had so far endured at the hands of their neighbor across the Channel. But before we examine this instance, let us set a standard of comparison. It has been stated by Lecky and other historians that Pitt's speech of April 2, 1792, on the abolition of slavery, was the finest ever made by this great orator. Certainly for its sound reasoning, its lucid argument, its cleverness in turning an opponent's case against the latter himself, its earnest rhetoric, its easy eloquence, this was so memorable an effort that we can not afford to pass it casually.

Chapter XIII

REVOLUTION AND REPRESSION

No fewer than five hundred and eight petitions praying for abolition of the slave trade had been presented on April second, and Wilberforce moved "that the trade carried on by British subjects, for the purpose of obtaining slaves on the coast of Africa, ought to be abolished." Midnight had passed, when Pitt began to address the House of Commons as follows:

At this hour of the morning I am afraid, Sir, I am too much exhausted to enter so fully into the subject before the Committee as I could wish; but if my bodily strength is in any degree equal to the task, I feel so strongly the magnitude of this question, that I am extremely earnest to deliver my sentiments, which I rise to do with the more satisfaction, because I now look forward to the issue of this business with considerable hopes of success. . . .

However we may differ as to the time and manner of it, we are agreed in the abolition itself. . . . Justice ought to extend her protection with rigid impartiality to the rich and to the poor, to the powerful and to the humble. . . . A contract for the continuance of the slave-trade must, on the principle which I shall presently insist on, have been void, even from the beginning; for if this trade is an outrage upon justice, and only another name for fraud, robbery and murder, will any man urge that the legislature could possibly by any pledge whatever incur the obligation of being an accessory, or I may even say a principal, in the commission of such enormities by sanctioning their continuance? As well might an individual think himself bound by a promise to commit an assassination.

Having dealt with the argument of expediency, Pitt continued:

But now, Sir, I come to Africa. . . . Why ought the slave-trade to be abolished? Because it is incurable injustice. . . . I know of no evil that ever has existed, nor can imagine any evil to exist, worse than the tearing of seventy or eighty thousand persons annually from their native land, by a combination of the most civilized nations, inhabiting the most enlightened quarter of the globe. . . . Do you think nothing of the ruin and the miseries in which so many other individuals, still remaining in Africa, are involved in consequence of carrying off so many myriads of people? Do you think nothing of their families which are left behind? Of the connections which are broken? Of the friendships, attachments and relationships that are burst asunder?

. . . Thus, Sir, has the perversion of British commerce carried misery instead of happiness to one whole quarter of the globe . . . there is no nation in Europe that has . . . plunged so deeply into this guilt as Britain. . . .

We may live to behold the natives of Africa engaged in the calm occupations of industry, in the pursuits of a just and legitimate commerce. We may behold the beams of science and philosophy breaking in upon their land.

And then he concluded with a final plea for abolition immediately:

. . . It is an atonement for our long and cruel injustice towards Africa, that the measure proposed by my honourable friend most forcibly recommends itself to my mind. . . . I shall vote, Sir, against the adjournment; and I shall also oppose to the utmost every proposition, which in any way may tend to prevent, or even to postpone for an hour, the total abolition of the slave-trade.

Here was William Pitt at the top of his form, tired of body but keen of intellect, inspired by his passion for fairness, only too glad of the chance for giving support alike to an old personal friend, and to a genuine need of

A BRITISH SAILOR

At the time of the French Revolution.

reform. But this was still April, 1792, and his appeal to a sympathetic House triumphed by the immense majority of two hundred and thirty to eighty-five. On April twenty-seventh he again spoke for the same object; and then afterwards, as we have mentioned, came that other Pitt who must be firm even to ruthlessness. It is a proof of his pacific desire that in spite of the alarm which had seized England in December, 1792, he was in the following month wishful to meet the French agent Maret; but the remainder of the Cabinet declined.

It was, however, the execution of Louis XVI on January twenty-first which roused such British indignation that peace could scarcely be expected to linger much longer. This anger is explicable not merely on the common ground of murder, but for several other reasons. Britain, notwithstanding her recent reforms, was still highly conventional in thought and habit. She was capable of being shocked very deeply, but especially by any assault on revered institutions. Kingship was one of those established customs which, thanks to Pitt, was never more respected than at this time. And the thought of what had happened to France's supreme ruler created in England a solemn, painful impression. Further, we shall not omit to recollect that in mode of thought Britain was still very much an island; the age of mechanical transport had yet to come along with its standardizing influence. Thus the eighteenth-century English had a natural instinct of suspicion, distrust and unfriendliness toward their foreign neighbors. They had, indeed, forgotten that their ancestors were responsible for the execution of Charles I; or in their criticism of the French it was convenient not to remember a seventeenth-century tragedy.

When, therefore, Pitt got on his feet to address the House of Commons this memorable first of February,

1793, he knew that at the back of him was a strong war party both within and without those four walls. Scarcely was it necessary to refer categorically to that criminal execution of eleven days ago, to "that calamitous event, to that dreadful outrage against every principle of religion, of justice, and of humanity, which has created one general sentiment of indignation and abhorrence in every part of the island, and most undoubtedly has produced the same effect in every civilized country."

He called attention to the French revolutionaries' principles, whose "consequences equally tend to shake the security of commerce, to rob the meanest individual in every country, of whatever is most dear and valuable to him. They strike directly against the authority of all regular government and the inviolable personal situation of every lawful sovereign." "It is the boast," he went on, "of the law of England, that it affords equal security and protection to the high and the low, to the rich and the poor." He compared the situation of England to the globe's temperate zone, "and what a splendid contrast does it form to the situation" of France! "It ought to be our first duty, and principal concern, to take the most effectual measures in order to stop the growth and progress in this country" of such dangerous principles.

"England," he averred, "will never consent that France shall arrogate the power of annulling at her pleasure . . . the political system of Europe." Through Monsieur Chauvelin, the former French Ambassador who had been permitted to remain in London, an ultimatum had been sent to Britain which concluded with one unequivocal sentence: "We will fight the English, whom we esteem, with regret; but we will fight them without fear." In a single paragraph Pitt summed up the whole situation: "This country has always been desirous of

peace. We desire it still. . . . War, whenever it comes, will be preferable to peace without honour, without security, and which is incompatible either with the external safety, or the internal happiness of the country."

After these words there was no need for the House to divide and vote. Forthwith they agreed to give George III the most effectual assistance in augmenting his forces by sea and land. Already a few days previously Pitt had got an Alien Bill passed which provided that foreigners must state the object of their visit to England, register their names and procure passports. The object herein was to guard against an inrush of Jacobin fugitives. On February twelfth Parliament was informed that France had declared war against England, and in March came the Traitorous Correspondence Bill which also was passed, extending the law of treason to the supplying of arms, military or naval stores, to the enemy, and to the purchase of land in France. Moreover, intercourse with France was forbidden except by special license under the Great Seal.

Pitt had no alternative but to adopt these measures. He was responsible for the safety of the State, and must act accordingly. Among the uneducated classes Paine's "bolshevism," as we should perhaps designate it in our time, was too serious to be ignored. The Navy might become easily infected, and then the main strength of Britain's bulwarks would collapse. Now ever since July, 1788, Pitt's elder brother, Lord Chatham, had been First Lord of the Admiralty. One morning, therefore, Pitt thought it wise to send him the following note, which sufficiently indicates the Premier's nervousness at this time:

"I have heard from another Quarter, that Paine's works &c. are circulated and read in the dock yards. It

might be well to give proper Directions to the Commissioners on this subject."*

During this war, while Pitt was so well supported in the House of Commons, his policy was continuously being opposed by Fox and the latter's numerically small party. On March the eleventh of this first year in hostilities Pitt had to make his Budget speech. With his usual straight honesty he set out to inspire confidence for the future. "I will omit nothing on my part to bring forward annually the whole accounts" of the war's cost. And not even a state of war was going to upset his sinking fund. "I not only mean still to employ the annual million for the reduction of the National Debt, but likewise the sum of two hundred thousand pounds, which was last year understood to be set apart for that purpose."

"Nothing," he told his hearers, "certainly, is so difficult as to calculate, with any degree of certainty, upon the events of War. . . . This is a war in which, not merely adopting empty professions, but speaking the language of our hearts, and fulfilling the impressions of our duty, we are ready to sacrifice our lives and fortunes for the safety of our country, the security of Europe, and in the cause of justice, humanity, and religion." For the Navy forty-five thousand men had to be voted—in contrast with his budget of the previous year. That branch of the service had numerically varied a great deal during the last ninety-three years. The personnel had been as low as seven thousand in 1722 and as high as seventy thousand in 1760.

Pitt's theory was that France's limited finances would mean a short war; but he was not the only person in history who wrongly assumed that absence of ready

* "Chatham Papers," P. R. O.

money would or could throttle hostilities. At this date he was relying on meeting the expense chiefly by the loan of four and one-half millions; though he was soon to be taught how voracious an appetite the monster War possesses. During this year 1793 a serious financial crisis did occur in the country, though it was not wholly caused by the broken international relationship. The reason is rather to be found in a combination of circumstances. First, England's new prosperity during the last few years had locked up a considerable amount of capital in new machinery, erecting factories, scrapping old methods, digging canals and so on. The national banking system had grown beyond its reserve strength. The beginning of a bad harvest series, coupled with the Declaration of War, altogether aided the other items in bringing about heavy failures, bankruptcies, stoppage of payment in many country banks and finally panic. Pitt stepped in, showed that the Government was prepared to lend money to any one of genuine solvency, and thus the crisis soon passed away.

But in these anxious times (whereof the full gravity was not even yet fully realized) Pitt was leading Parliament to concentrate on national safety rather than the welfare of its inhabitants. The House of Lords, moreover, postponed the bill for abolishing slave trade, in spite of Pitt's eloquence. There were, however, those Englishmen who argued that these various repressive schemes had gone too far. Just because the French had abused their liberty, was it a sound reason that Britain should forfeit hers? So we find Mr. Grey on May 7, 1793, boldly, by way of reaction, introducing his motion for parliamentary reform. Again Pitt was compelled to oppose the measure which in principle enjoyed his approval. Owing to the wild excesses under the blessed

name of liberty, owing to the terrible upheaval of society and constitutional government in France, Pitt regarded Grey's intention as likely to produce much mischief. Burke agreed with Pitt, and by a large majority the House of Commons vetoed Grey's measure. In June an agitation for peace with France was being instigated by Fox, but this likewise was badly supported.

With his own mind convinced that his clear duty lay in doing everything on behalf of a victorious war, fully conscious, too, that backing him up was public opinion, Pitt had now to provide that France was attacked on land, at sea and in her colonies. With regard to the first, he well knew that the British Army was not what it might be; his aim was consequently to form a powerful international coalition of France's enemies, and expend large sums of money in the subsidization of mercenary troops. Between March and October of 1793 he concluded a vast European alliance of Britain, Prussia, Austria, Holland, Spain, Portugal, Russia, Naples and Sardinia. The amount of eight hundred and thirty-two thousand pounds was granted for mercenaries. The British Navy was not unprepared, the expected rupture with Spain in 1790 and with Russia in 1791 had caused an unprecedented activity in the dockyards of England, so that a month before the French war broke out no fewer than sixty of the eighty-seven line-of-battle ships were in first-class condition, there was an abundance of stores and the magazines were filled with powder. On the other hand the French had eighty-two ships-of-the-line, of which more than half were ready for service, and seventy-one more began to be built as soon as war was declared.

Pitt's previous preparedness for naval efficiency, during a period of strained relationship with other powers,

had not altogether been wasted. Lord Hood was sent to cooperate with a Spanish fleet in the Mediterranean and to occupy Toulon, which contained a strong nucleus of French Royalists. But there were not enough of the latter in the town, and when twenty-five thousand revolutionaries surrounded Toulon, the place had to be abandoned after destroying forts and ships on December 19, 1793. Accompanying Hood from Spithead was Horatio Nelson, who had been born less than a year before Pitt came into the world; and it is from 1793 that the future terror of French and Spanish admirals really began his fighting career. Before the British fleet had entered Toulon, Nelson had been sent with despatches to Sir William Hamilton, the British Ambassador at the Court of Naples, whose King was brother of the Spanish King. It was at Toulon, likewise, that a young Corsican officer distinguished himself in the French service by his energy in rallying the troops. This officer was none other than Napoleon Bonaparte.

Pitt was attempting the impossible task of keeping intact an unwieldy military coalition. Even under the best and most favorable circumstances it is no easy business for such war alliances to remain; but in this present case, it was top heavy and bound to collapse. He was having an anxious time even for one of his well-disciplined mind. While the distinguished French soldier, Jean Baptise Drouet, was suggesting bribing some one to assassinate George III and William Pitt,* the latter for the first time was beginning to show the combined effects of mental and nervous strain, gout and too much port. The failure of the British Army on the continent and its subsequent retreat at Dunkirk were the immediate opportunities for providing the first visible evidence that he

* "Dropmore MSS."

was already paying the big penalty. With practically no intermission, he had been driving his brain and nerves at full pressure since days of infancy. While it is true that the good sea air and restfulness of Walmer always benefited him when he could spare the time, and he was able in the seasons to obtain from here both hunting and shooting; yet he was never away from letters, State documents, visitors, or the making of future plans.

On the other hand, he had that valuable faculty—that ability which is essential for any great Premier—of not allowing his cares of office to overwhelm him. He was so much the master of his own soul that he could temporarily banish the biggest cares, read a book, engage in trivial conversation and forget major troubles. And he himself always used to say that whatever the anxiety, however tremendous the calamity of the moment, nothing seriously affected his sleep. His sensitiveness was in his pride; there alone could he be hurt by political, personal or foreign enemies. It was only when his honor and integrity were questioned, or disappointment was caused by the failure of the British Army abroad, that he felt such pain as helped to bring about his decease.

James Gillray, the contemporary caricaturist, who did not hesitate to use George III and his court as butts for pictorial satire, has left us a print entitled *John Bull's Progress,* which shows how sadly British military matters during 1793 were regarded in England. First, he indicates for us the happy cottage-home of the previous year, with John Bull seated by his fireside, a mug of beer on his knee, his wife spinning, his children merrily playing with a bird in the cage; all is peace and pleasure. In the next picture John is seen going off with musket and martial tread to the war, leaving behind him a weeping family. Next we have depicted his wife and family so lacking

for money that they must take spinning-wheel, household and gardening utensils to the pawnbroker. Finally, in the fourth caricature, Gillray shows John Bull limping with one leg and minus one eye back to a cottage that is poverty-stricken and a family that is emaciated.

So, during these trying times, it was the Navy which sustained Pitt's foreign policy and kept optimism alive in mansion, cottage and middle-class households. For this we have in no small measure to thank Viscount Hood (elder brother of Lord Bridport) who was at the Admiralty from 1788 to 1793, and had returned to England after the Toulon action, and Lord Howe, who from 1783 to 1788 had been at the Admiralty, likewise, as First Lord. Howe had been responsible for revolutionizing the Navy's tactical efficiency, so that from 1793 there was well established on a new signal code a system which was the basis for all the great actions of the Nelson period. For up till 1782 no important book on naval tactics had been published in English, save for translations from the French.

Now, during the winter of 1793-94 the British Channel Fleet lay at anchor, but ready for sea, as soon as the cruisers should report that the French Fleet were coming out of Brest. France during 1794 was in this difficulty: the pressure of the Allied Armies on her frontiers and the bad harvest of 1793 had brought her dangerously near famine. Whither could she look for help? The answer lay across the Atlantic. Inasmuch as she had previously assisted the rebelling English colonists, so now the United States responded by placing large supplies in the holds of many ships to be sent willingly to France. In order to protect these vessels, war-ships were sent out from Brest.

Howe was commander-in-chief of the Channel Fleet; and in May, 1794, having escorted the British convoys

(for East India, West Indies and Newfoundland) as far as the Lizard, spent the rest of that month hovering about west of Brest, till he eventually sighted the French Fleet. There ensued the historic action known as "The Glorious First of June." It was a victory for Howe, though neither a brilliant nor complete victory, and a few days later the Franco-American food convoy of one hundred and sixteen escorted ships got into Brest. But Howe's arrival at Spithead with his prizes certainly had an inspiring effect for Englishmen. In the same year Martinique was captured, so here also, was invigoration for the despondent. When Howe wrote to thank the House of Lords for their unanimous resolution of thanks, he added, "if there is a cause for triumph in the late defeat of the enemy at sea, it is truly the triumph of British sailors, whose animated and persevering courage, I believe, has in no instance ever been exceeded." He might also have added that had it not been for men bred in the hard seamanship school of Channel smugglers and the East India Company's vessels, such able crews largely furnished by press-gang compulsion would not have been possible.

But on the continent Pitt had to contemplate the retreat of Austrians and Prussians into Germany, the Duke of York's rout near to Dunkirk, so that Belgium and Holland were to be overrun. Frederick Augustus, Duke of York (1763-1827), was George III's second and best-beloved son. Nowadays it would be impossible for all the influence in the country to allow one as incompetent as the Duke of York to be given such a command. To Pitt, the model of efficiency, such a Prince was pitiable and pretentious. While there were personal reasons for not liking the Duke, who was such a regular associate and friend of the Prince of Wales, and had in 1788

H.M.S. JUNO ESCAPING FROM TOULON

On the night of January 11, 1794, being hotly engaged with the French forts.

spoken in the House of Lords against Pitt's Regency Bill, yet there can be not the slightest doubt that the Premier and nation alike were severely handicapped in being saddled with so inefficient a general.

The Duke loved soldiering, and he also had the virtue of a kind and generous disposition, though on one occasion he did not hesitate to fight a duel with the Duke of Richmond. From one source and another he was enjoying an income of seventy thousand pounds a year—a colossal sum for those days. Through his father's desire, His Royal Highness at the outbreak of war in 1793 was given command of the British forces sent into Flanders, there to cooperate with the Austrian Army. But this campaign proved that neither the Duke of York nor his Army was equal in capability to the French. That he was unable to forsake dissipation, even on active service, may have been not wholly unconnected with the complete failure of these operations. Two letters written by Pitt to George III indicate, however, that the Premier's moral courage was such that he could undertake a delicate task with firmness. These extracts are from the transcripts preserved among the "Chatham Papers"; and the extensive deletions, as well as revisions, in Pitt's scholarly handwriting again tend to show that he was always more fluent with his tongue than with his pen.

By October 11, 1794, Pitt wrote to the King that, "It does not appear possible either that your Majesty's troops can be put under Dutch command or the Dutch troops under the Duke of York"; but adds significantly that "the *extreme urgency* of the present crisis" calls for "the assistance of the utmost military experience and authority." Finally, on November twenty-third, Pitt sent the King a note from Hollwood that "he can never have a more painful task to execute," than this which

is "one of the greatest delicacy." It concerns "the present crisis in the situation of the United Provinces. . . . It is too evident how little Harmony" exists "between your Majesty's Troops and those of the Republic." Again Pitt says frankly that the Duke of York is lacking in ability and experience. "Under the circumstances Mr. Pitt is reluctantly compelled to submit to Yr. Majesty his deliberate opinion that the continuance of the Duke of York in the command, can be attended only with the most disadvantageous consequences to H. R. H. himself."

But in this same year there was a change in personnel, when Pitt's government became strengthened by the accession of four leading Whigs, who were all favorable to a strenuous war policy. These were the Duke of Portland, the Earl Fitzwilliam, George John second Earl Spencer, and Mr. William Windham. This was a notable proof of Pitt's popular policy, and of Fox's failure to make much impression. It was also illustrative of the influence which Burke's secession had brought about. Pitt was now able to perform another delicate task in getting rid of his brother, Lord Chatham, who had been First Lord of the Admiralty ever since 1788. On December twentieth he made way for Lord Spencer, which was much to be desired. Thus, with the Whig party consisting of merely Fox, Grey and a tiny minority to oppose Pitt, they were of slight account. It was the war that now mattered; victory was the one aim.

During this year Pitt had been compelled to impose new taxes and raise a loan of eleven million pounds sterling. Besides the Traitorous Correspondence Act, there came the Habeas Corpus Suspension Act, which annoyed Fox intensely. Prosecutions and harsh judicial sentences may have seemed in those critical days questionable; but we, who have lived through a greater war,

appreciate fully that Pitt had no other alternative than to be drastic in eliminating that subtle disaffection which was at work. In the words of the message to Parliament from George III, "seditious practices to an alarming extent had been carried on by certain societies in London with societies in different parts of the country, tending to subvert the laws and constitution of the kingdom."

So also in this same year, 1794, the Volunteer Corps Bill had been passed without even a division. The object of this scheme was "for the encouragement and discipline of such persons as shall voluntarily enrol themselves for the general defence of the country." Invasion was now beginning to seem more than a mere possibility, all pacifists were looked upon as bad fellows and Jacobins, and when George III, together with the Queen and Princesses, went down to enjoy August by the sea at Gloucester Lodge, Weymouth, special precautions had to be taken. The King amused himself by riding or going out sailing in the bay. A small naval squadron was therefore stationed off the port, including the sloop *Farrel*. All night long armed boats from the frigate and sloops used to row about, lest the French should suddenly arrive, while on land patrols for the royal safety were being maintained by the Dragoons and the Bucks Militia.

In July, 1794, came the retirement of Edmund Burke from Parliament at the age of sixty-five. This son of a Dublin attorney two years previously had been left two thousand pounds by Sir Joshua Reynolds, who had made the statesman his executor. Three days after Christmas, that same year 1792, Burke had with true Irish instinct for the dramatic, suddenly during the debate on the Alien Bill drawn a dagger and allowed it to clatter on the floor. "This," he demonstrated, "is what you are to gain by an alliance with France," and mentioned that

in Birmingham an order had been received for manufacturing three thousand of such weapons. It was rank melodrama and irritated even the undiscriminating sentimentalists of the House. But Burke had been of considerable service to Pitt ever since the French Revolution loomed up as a danger to Britain.

Nor did Pitt forget what he owed to him. Burke was always in debt, and rather heavily at that. Pitt, being in the same condition, understood and sympathized. Once he had been a bitter political enemy, but now things were different. So on August 30, 1794, we find Pitt writing to the "Right Hon. Edmund Burke" that the King is granting him out of the Civil List a pension of one thousand, two hundred pounds per annum; but in the next session a higher annuity would be paid.* The sum mentioned was to be for life and dated back so as to begin with January 5, 1793. And in the nicest possible terms Pitt adds this remark to the man, whose fiery rhetoric would never again be heard in Parliament: "it will be a very honorable and gratifying part of my Duty to take the first opportunity of conveying the King's Recommendation for carrying it into effect." Burke, however, was destined to live only another three years; still, in looking back on the eighteenth century one does marvel at the ease with which large sums of money were being paid out to individuals, even at a time when Pitt was abolishing so many sinecures, and the country was rapidly approaching a financial crisis.

* "Chatham Papers," P. R. O.

Chapter XIV

PITT AND THE PENDULUM

After two years of war and worry, with fears for the country's finance and his own private exchequer, Pitt again betrayed the heavy toll which was being borne by his none too robust body. Fortunately we have an exact statement by the eminent physician, Sir. W. Farquhar, who was now for the first time to attend Pitt in 1795. This interesting document was revealed by the late Lord Rosebery, who had it printed for private circulation thirty years ago. Farquhar put on record the following remarks:

I found him in a state of general debility . . . much of which I attributed to the excess of public business & the unremitting attention upon subjects of anxiety and interest. I thought myself called upon to urge the necessity of some relaxation from the arduous Duties of Office, in order to regain strength & afford the natural functions time & opportunity to rally. This Mr. Pitt stated to be impossible. There appeared at this time to be little or no constitutional mischief done, but the symptoms of debility with a gouty tendency, which Doctor Addington (as Mr. Pitt mentioned to me) had always remarked from his infancy, were likely to become formidable if neglected.

But 1795 was to be as arduous and harassing as any period of Pitt's life. In July came a military operation of doubtful wisdom, when French Royalist troops were conveyed to Quiberon. It turned out to be both costly and fruitless, for the French General, Lazare Hoche, destroyed the effort in July, and Pitt had to suffer severe

criticism. Pitt's budget this year indicated that Britain must either make peace or endure a long period of financial stress. He was compelled once more to increase the burden of taxation, and to raise a loan of eighteen more millions sterling. Against this it is true that British foreign trade was doing better than ever in its whole history, yet the recent bad harvests had raised the price of bread, and this was the sure prelude to trouble.

On July sixteenth Lady Mary Kenyon wrote to Lord Kenyon: "We had no riot last night at all, but the night before, they were very violent, wanted to get to Mr. Pitt's house to pull it down, but were kept off by the military. The Duchess of Gloucester was in great danger, returning from the circus; she was pursued by the mob crying No Royalty! No Pitt! till she got very near to her own house." * On his way to open Parliament in October the mob pelted George III's carriage, but the cries were for "Bread!" "No war!" "No famine!" So next month were introduced the Treasonable Practices Bill and the Seditious Meetings Bill. Fox, of course, protested that such measures were a repeal of the Bill of Rights, but Parliament was well aware of the internal danger to the country, and promptly negatived his opposition.

It was an ironical attitude for Pitt, the apostle of liberty, to be the instigator of these acts against freedom. Not less unpleasant was it for him to find his coalition of allies ever collapsing. The arrangement had been clumsy, unworkable and expensive, so that before long Austria and Sardinia were the only active allies left to him. The Triple Alliance which he formed with Russia and Austria became not less costly and futile. Good money, obtained with pain from the pockets of his countrymen, had thus been wasted. And then in this year

* "Kenyon MSS."

France became joined by the Dutch and Spaniards. This was indeed a bitter blow, and on August 3, 1795, we find Pitt conveying the sad news to Lord Chatham in a letter written at Downing Street:

My dear Brother,

In addition to the bad news which was the subject of my last Letter, I am very sorry to have to tell you that We have received from Paris accounts of Peace being concluded with Spain at Basle on the 22d July . . . setting at Liberty so large an additional French force. . . .

Ever Affectionately Yours
W. Pitt.*

By the end of that year Pitt was genuinely anxious for peace, and on December ninth informed the House that neither the form of government in France, nor the circumstances which existed formerly, were any longer the reason for preventing a negotiation between France and Britain; but that the whole question of peace must depend on the terms. Thus in the following year we find him entering into negotiations with the Directory.

But this did not happen at once. Indeed, when Mr. Grey on February 15, 1796, moved that such negotiations be opened, Pitt strongly objected, and proved the feeling of the Commons by one hundred and eighty-nine to fifty votes against this peace approach. Pitt nevertheless stated that the King's Ministers "have taken every measure consistent with the general interests of the country, and with the attention and regard due to her allies . . . either to meet overtures for negociation, or to make such overtures as might be found most expedient." On May tenth Fox spoke of "the distress, difficulty, and peril, to

* "Chatham Papers," P. R. O.

which the country is now subjected," and attacked the conduct of the war by Ministers "who are influenced either by arrogance, or infatuated by ambition and vain hopes of conquests, which, if realized, could never compensate to the nation for the blood and treasure by which they must be obtained."

To this accusation Pitt replied that, "we do not shut the door against negociation whenever it can be fairly entered upon, but the enemy, so far from meeting us, say plainly they cannot listen to any terms, but such as in honour we cannot accept." And again the House backed up Pitt's expression of policy by two hundred and seven to forty-five votes. Parliament, however, was dissolved that month, and Pitt's party returned once more with a maintained majority. But it is quite clear that the British Government this summer had not enough money to pay all its debts; and when Pitt's budget appeared at the end of 1796 he required further taxation "to defray the heavy burden which it becomes necessary to impose, in order to meet the exigency of our situation. This is a painful, but at the same time indispensable, part of my duty."

The problem, then, was how to find fresh wells for a continuous supply. The cost of the far-flung Navy and the subsidizing of foreign troops, were putting such a strain on the national patience as had never previously been attempted. While Pitt was the first of British Finance Ministers, the last thing he had ever desired was to have war thrust upon him. It had diverted all his constructive energies, ruined his plans for national prosperity, and entirely upset the trend of his own personal career. Burke had been able to foresee what would be the developing lines of the Revolution; Pitt had not that prophetic, penetrative imagination or insight. But it is

because of his adaptability, in suddenly laying aside all his reforms and concentrating on the one aim of annihilating France, that Pitt wins our admiration. He wanted not peace, but a secure and lasting peace; not merely for Britain, but for Europe. To achieve this end, he must break France's power chiefly by means of Britain's strength which lay in the Navy. He longed to win back that prosperity which belongs to peace, that liberty which must have order for its basis. He wanted an organized freedom, not a threatened internal disorganization, created by France's expressed intention to subvert existing institutions.

He was not a born strategist, yet his was the controlling mind which accurately laid down this plain principle: French aggressiveness could be smashed by cutting off her resources, ruining her colonial system, preventing raw materials from reaching her manufacturers, chasing her mercantile shipping off the sea, and in fact isolating her till she was thrown back on her internal resources. When once her fleets were definitely defeated, then her armies would be confined to certain limitations. As Mahan summed up the situation, Britain gained by the fact that she possessed at this time a single leader in whom the nation had complete trust; and "if it is to the maritime power of Great Britain that Europe owes the arrest of a subversive revolution . . . then to Pitt, as the master spirit who directed the movements of the British nation, the gratitude of Europe is due."*

By 1797 Britain was actually throttling France through this means, but during the latter part of 1796 Pitt saw with a disciplined alarm that his own country was heading toward financial ruin. That September he

* *The Influence of Sea Power upon the French Revolution and Empire,* by A. T. Mahan. II, p. 366.

was making a short stay at Weymouth and on the fourth of the month wrote anxiously to his brother, Lord Chatham: "An immediate Spanish War tho' not yet formally announced, seems certain, but this does not come unexpectedly; and (if We can satisfy the Country that We have done enough towards General Peace) it will not I trust produce much embarrassment. Our great apparent difficulty is Finance, which can only be removed by bringing People to a temper for very unusual exertions."* On June twenty-third of this year he had written from Walmer Castle to his kinsman, Lord Grenville, the Secretary for Foreign Affairs, that "it would be inexcusable not to try any chance that can be tried, honorably and safely, to set on foot some decent plan of pacification."†

Meanwhile how could he squeeze more money out of the taxpayers? The Navy during 1796 had cost four millions sterling more than he had estimated for; but that was only one item of account. Where could he find revenue to keep hostilities going, provide seamen's wages, obtain timber and spars, guns, ammunition, cordage, maintain the dockyards, pay for ships' stores, refit them with new sails?

He put his finger first on the sales of tea, which had become such a popular beverage that its consumption during the last year had exceeded all records. He therefore placed a further tax on this commodity at ten per cent. of its value. This alone would bring in a sum of two hundred forty thousand pounds. But he further imposed duties on sales by auction; on bricks, spirits, sugar, wines, coffee-houses, stage-coaches, parcels and so on. "In this period of the war—God grant that it may be short!—it is still a matter of much congratulation,"

* "Chatham Papers," P. R. O.

† "Dropmore MSS."

exclaimed Pitt, "under all we have suffered . . . that . . . we have been able to meet the exigency of the crisis."

But while the British Navy during this year 1796 obtained some victories in the West Indies, Bonaparte (who had been rewarded for his brilliant services by being appointed general of the French army in Italy) had defeated the Austrians and Piedmontese, and that distinguished French General, Moreau, had been victorious in Germany. Such successes stimulated the French lust for aggrandizement and made peace still less likely. Now during the General Elections Pitt had felt justified in making a loan to Germany of one million, two hundred thousand pounds before consulting Parliament. This provided Fox with a perfect opportunity, and on December 8, 1796, "in very animated language" he attacked this proceeding, which on a later occasion he characterized as unconstitutional.

Pitt had to defend his honor, but his case was not altogether easy. He replied by at once relying on "the candor and justice of the House," and told his hearers that "the practise of extraordinaries had been adopted" at various periods in previous history. He admitted that "according to the fundamental principles of the constitution, all grants must proceed from the Commons"; yet it would be impossible to carry on war without such "extraordinaries" as this which was being criticized. Pitt was in a difficult position, and he knew it. Technically he had erred, yet here was one of those exceptional cases where the breaking of a rule was surely justified. The cleverness of him as a debater came out conspicuously, as a barrister makes more than a success out of a weak set of facts. When one listens to Pitt's speech, one smiles at the skill, the evasion, the circumlocution, the sheer

bluff, by which he emerged from a tight corner. By yielding a little here, fully agreeing on some other point, insisting that it was essential "to invigorate the spirit of a country making its utmost efforts to resist an invading foe"; appealing for the sympathy of the House, hurling spontaneously at them Latin quotations, citing precedents and then finally remarking, "I throw myself upon your justice," he achieved his aim. By two hundred and eighty-five votes to eighty-one the Commons agreed that his action "was, under the peculiar circumstances of the case, a justifiable and proper exercise of the discretion vested in His Majesty's Minister." Nevertheless, there were some constituencies in the country who thoroughly disapproved of what Pitt had done, and it taught him a lesson not to take on his shoulders again such a responsibility without having previously obtained Parliament's sanction.

By the end of 1796 further negotiations for peace had signally failed, and the French had required the British plenipotentiary to quit Paris within forty-eight hours. Britain had now reached an almost zero of humiliation and peril. An enormous load of debt, an impaired credit, a series of military defeats, a rising discontent among the people, a dismemberment of all the great monarchical powers formed in 1793 to destroy France, and no visible signs of the war coming to an end—this was the prospect which Pitt had to face. And, further, he was to learn with pain that he had been wrong in ever supposing that France would, through lack of funds, be forced to sue for peace. On the contrary, British credit now collapsed.

While the population of England had been growing fast, the price of agricultural products had been increasing, and the working classes had suffered considerably,

notwithstanding that Pitt in his taxation had endeavored (in accordance with the teaching of Adam Smith) to keep the poor from being burdened. All that the latter wanted was food and peace, but now the fear of a French invasion brought further anxiety.

It is a historic fact that England's difficulty has generally been regarded as Ireland's opportunity. The Sinn Fein rising of Easter, 1916, was selected at that period because England was so fully occupied with war against Germany. During the eighteenth century war with France came as Ireland's chance to obtain for herself anything that could be won. On the other hand Ireland found in Pitt one who, without being by so much as a hair's breadth himself inclined to accept the Roman Catholic faith, listened to Irish claims with sympathy. He was equitably minded, and he believed that there was a certain solidity among Roman Catholic Irish that was during these revolutionary times politically valuable. We have seen how he tried in 1785 to give Ireland a commercial equality with Britain. He had also sympathized with the Irish Catholic Relief Bill of 1792. A year later Irish Roman Catholics had been admitted to the franchise.

Now when those powerful Whigs joined Pitt in 1794, as already mentioned, it was urged that Ireland should receive the benefit of reform and emancipation. For this reason John, Earl of Westmoreland, who had been Lord Lieutenant of Ireland since 1790, was now recalled and Earl Fitzwilliam, a powerful Whig, succeeded him in office. Pitt's intention was not to hand Ireland over as a gift to the Whigs, nor to bring about violent changes. He was busy enough with the French war, and—as the facts appear to me—wanted to be relieved of anxiety across the Irish Sea. If he could secure a period of peace for Ireland, he could confine his attention to France.

Admittedly he was somewhat vague in defining his Irish policy at this moment, but I suggest that this was not unintentional; it was part of his skill. He was in a difficult dilemma. While at heart he wanted to concede Irish emancipation, yet this was a period of revolution, and not the time for reformation. Moreover, George III was definitely against any change, though that was a personal characteristic of his fundamental conservatism generally. However, on arrival in Ireland, Fitzwilliam gave out that emancipation must be granted immediately: laws which excluded Irish Roman Catholics from Parliament and office must be repealed.

This led to a delicate situation. Pitt recalled Fitzwilliam early in 1795, and that in turn created tremendous anger throughout Roman Catholic Ireland. Burke was stirred to despair of religious toleration ever becoming practicable. His mother was a Roman Catholic, though his father was not. The statesman had to the end of his political career done his best to bring about a settled calm in Ireland, but he went to his grave still grieved and indignant that this was not possible. Fitzwilliam, too, had every reason to complain of the way he had been treated. It will suffice to quote extracts from two of his letters written from Dublin Castle at this time, addressed to Lord Carlisle (who had himself once been Lieutenant Governor of Ireland).

On March 6, 1795, Fitzwilliam writes that "the measure of emancipation to the Catholics was originally the measure of Mr. Pitt and of the Westmoreland Administration"; and on March twenty-third remarks that "I was decidedly of opinion that not only sound policy but justice required on the part of Great Britain that the work which was left imperfect at that period ought to be completed, and the Catholics relieved from every remain-

ing disqualification. . . . I found the great majority of the Cabinet, with Mr. Pitt at their head, strongly impressed with the same conviction. Had I found otherwise, I never would have undertaken the Government." And again, "I have then the glory of being the object of Mr. Pitt's dislike."*

While Fitzwilliam not unnaturally failed to see the logic of Pitt at this stage, it is but fair to emphasize that the Premier's mind and body were no longer at the height of their efficiency. His judgment now began to be more fallible, and there was not that clarity of perception or the firmness in decision; he was becoming more susceptible to outside influences. That which Britain then so much needed was what Pitt for his own health required: peace and rest. But to neither could such a condition yet be granted. So the wicked old policy of coercion, force and strife went on in Ireland; the one dominating thought of Pitt's Government being to prevent the spread of revolutionary doctrines over there.

But this Irish disaffection was a glorious chance for the French to carry out their professed intention of subverting order. General Hoche planned that a fleet should escort him and a powerful army to the southwest Irish coast, where he expected to find a large body of rebellious Irish to aid him in subjugating the country to France. Considerable time was spent in making preparations, so that it was not till the middle of December, 1796, that the expedition of forty-three ships and fifteen thousand troops sailed out of Brest. On December twenty-first it reached Bantry Bay, where it anchored. As one who spent two war years patrolling off this Bay, I can vouch for the fact that winter's gales sweeping in from the Atlantic send along heavy seas that batter this rock-strewn

* "Carlisle MSS."

coast without mercy. Before Hoche's expedition could disembark, a gale impelled the fleet from their anchors, sank one ship, dismantled others and drove several ashore. The net result was that the remnant returned to Brest after complete failure. But the plan was not altogether laid aside.

About this very time—Christmas, 1796—Pitt went to spend a week at Eden Farm, Beckenham, which was no distance from Hollwood. Eden Farm was the home of his old political friend, William Eden, for whom Pitt had in 1789 obtained an Irish peerage. Since then this Lord Auckland had further distinguished himself as Ambassador Extraordinary at the Hague during those critical years 1791-93, when the French Revolution was causing so much suspense. In 1793 he had retired from diplomacy and was created a peer of Great Britain as Lord Auckland of West Auckland, Durham, and was given a pension of two thousand three hundred pounds a year. He still, however, continued to be a great force in politics and enjoyed the confidence of Pitt to a considerable extent.

Lord Auckland had a daughter, named Eleanor after her mother, and during this Christmas house-party such a friendship was ripened between the Honourable Eleanor Eden and William Pitt, that a match was discussed by the gossips, and the lady's parents were anything but averse to such a sequel. Nor was this the first time that so eligible a bachelor had been talked about in those circles where marriages are schemed. Thus on March 16, 1784, the Earl of Mornington writes to W. W. Grenville, Pitt's own cousin, in these words: "Tell Lady Temple that Dublin says Lady Catherine is to be married to Pitt."* So, also, Tomline says that "the father of a

* "Dropmore Papers."

rich heiress would gladly accept him as a son-in-law, and a similar intention was made to him from a person of the highest rank in the kingdom. . . . At a later period of life, he showed a very marked attention to the daughter of a political friend, at whose house he frequently visited, and he for some time hesitated whether he should make a proposal of marriage. . . . I have always greatly lamented that Mr. Pitt did not marry early in life."*

Now these statements, coming from Bishop Tomline (his most intimate and most secretive friend) who was with him even as Pitt breathed his last, may be taken as entirely reliable. Lord Rosebery understands the "rich heiress" to have been Mademoiselle Necker, daughter of the great French financier. But it is difficult to suppose Pitt would ever have seriously meditated allying himself to a foreigner. The second reference is thought to indicate the Duchess of Gordon's daughter, and the third is of course Miss Eden. Here was the most talked about bachelor in all Europe, against whom there had never been even a whiff of scandal, a brilliant young man of the purest morals, illustrious talents, and son of the great Lord Chatham. It seemed miraculous that some clever woman of society had not locked him in marriage ages ago.

Pitt, like most serious-minded men, had another side of his character which was but rarely exhibited. It was visible only upon such intimate occasions as within the home of a very special friend. Tomline mentions the case of a distinguished person meeting Pitt for the first time at another Christmas country house party, and declaring that he had never been so much mistaken in his conception of a man's private character. He found Pitt the "pleasantest person" he had ever known. Those few days at Eden Farm must have been found, mentally,

*Suppressed Chapter 27.

a great relief from the heavy worries of French war, Irish invasion and imminent financial alarm at the Bank of England. He had been glad for one brief interlude to forget his rôle as the pilot who was steering the state ship: he even allowed himself, amid the solid comforts of a happy household, to become fond of his host's daughter and to show it. But then, with the coming of a New Year and the return to Downing Street, his mind was no longer that of a romantic lover; he must stick to the helm and get on with his steering.

Of all the most difficult and delicate tasks which ever Pitt was called on to undertake, few can have required more moral courage than that of writing the following letter to Lord Auckland so shortly after having enjoyed the latter's hospitality. The note was dated from Downing Street, January 20, 1797, and marked "Most Private":

"My dear Lord," it begins, and first goes on to apologize for not having been down to Beckenham. "It can hardly, I think, be necessary to say," he gets down to his duty, "that the time I have passed among your family has led to my forming sentiments of very real attachment towards them all, and of much more than attachment towards one whom I need not name. Nor should I do justice to my own feelings, or explain myself as frankly as I think I ought to do, if I did not own that every hour of my acquaintance with the person to whom you will easily conceive I refer has served to augment and confirm that impression; in short has convinced me that whoever may have the good fortune ever to be united with her is destined to more than his share of human happiness." But "having now at length reflected as fully and as calmly as I am able on every circumstance that ought to come under my consideration (at least as much

for her sake as for my own), I am compelled so say that I find the obstacles to it decisive and insurmountable. . . . Ever sincerely and faithfully yours, W. Pitt."

This letter arrived at Eden Farm next day by messenger, and had a painful effect. Auckland needed some time in which to talk the matter over with Lady Auckland before replying, and kept the messenger waiting on the pretense, "because I could not find some papers." At half past four by candle-light the diplomat sat down and sent Pitt the following letter:

"My dear Sir, . . . It has been impossible for Ly. Ad. & for me not to remark that you entertained the partiality which you describe; and it has been for several weeks the happiest subject of conversation that we have had thro' the course of a very happy life, to consider it in every point of view. We had from an early period every reason to believe that the sentiments formed were *most cordially* mutual: and we saw with delight that they were ripening into an attachment which might lay the foundation of a system of most perfect happiness, for the two persons for whom we were so much concerned." After praising his daughter's mind, which "has formed itself under my observation" (he does not hesitate to stress), and having referred to her gentleness, accomplishments and so forth, he remarks that he showed Pitt's letter to Lady Auckland. "After some deliberation on its contents, we thought it fair to the person whom it most immediately concerned to avail ourselves of your implied permission to confide it to her. . . . We presume that the obstacles alluded to are those of circumstances. . . . As to circumstances of fortune, I may be imprudent in the idea, but I cannot think that they ought in such a case to create an hour's interruption in an intercourse essentially sought & loved by us all; still less that

they ought to affect the ultimate result, tho' they may impede it. I am sure that the person alluded to has steadiness of mind to wait any indefinite period of Time for that difficulty if possible to be got over. I am sure also that it would be happiness to her, as it has often been to her mother, to share such difficulties, & to endeavour also to lessen them. I only regret that my own position puts it out of my power to remove those difficulties. I have about 2000£ belonging to her from a legacy, & what I owe to the others will not allow me to add much to it." Finally Auckland, resolved to do his share in the matter, suggests that Pitt "should come to this place as soon as convenient, & especially in the eyes of observers as if nothing had happened. We can talk about the whole at leisure & again & again. . . . Believe me, sincerely & affectionately yours A^d.^"

But Pitt's mind was not to be influenced. On January twenty-second he sent the pained father another letter marked, this time, "Most Private." He thanked "My dear Lord" and his Lady for their kindness and explained that he did not bring himself to this decision without having considered every point. "The circumstances of every man's private and personal situation can often, on various accounts, be fully known and fairly judged of by no one but himself . . . further explanation or discussion can answer no good purpose. . . . It could only lead to prolonged suspense and increased anxiety." Auckland wasted no time but again replied in a note marked "Private & in Confidence." The latter was evidently suffering as much from wounded pride as from the shock. He mentions "a large circle of respective Friends" and others "who had imagined that the union alluded to was within extreme probability." He trusted that outward appearances might continue as before. "As between you & me,

I hope you will contrive that we may meet as if this subject of correspondence had never existed."

The Premier's next letter (of January twenty-third) was written from Hollwood, and makes a suggestion for overcoming the obvious comments of the curious minded. "I should try to let it be understood that nothing was more natural for a variety of reasons, than that I should have been led to pass so much of my time in your Society." But in the meanwhile Auckland had committed what every reader will consider an unfortunate blunder. For on this self-same morning the diplomat, who had in previous years won from Pitt so much praise for his negotiations at Versailles, at Madrid and the Hague, now most undiplomatically mingled public affairs, personal ambition and private affection. With surprising temerity, Auckland promptly wrote asking for the Privy Seal to be conferred on himself. Pitt, however, was going to have none of this, and in the most tactful manner showed that affairs of the heart could not be associated with affairs of State. The Prime Minister declined the invitation; he considered that Lord Mornington had the prior claim, and quietly delivered to Auckland a well-merited snub. "Another [gratification] and a most essential one indeed would be if I saw my way to an immediate Accomplishment of the Arrangement you point at," was his neat manner of refusal.

Still another note was written by the noble lord, on the evening of January twenty-third, but no longer is the correspondence marked "Private." This time it is the father of an offended daughter, the husband of a disappointed mother, who at first seems to express his feelings with bitterness. "I doubt," says Auckland, "whether you are in any degree aware how much this business has been observed and discussed in societies,

correspondencies, and newspapers." Next he tells, with curious verbosity and round-about phrasing, the reaction of this incident on daughter and mother. "Yesterday the two of the same name were utterly unable to quit their apartments, or to see friends who, being accustomed to meet them at church, called afterwards to enquire about them. The younger of the two still shows too much by her looks what has passed in her mind to be able to appear to-day."

Nevertheless in this very letter Auckland actually has the bad taste to mention once more that honor of the Privy Seal. He says that it is essential "to me and still more to mine to have as soon as possible an ostensible & honourable pretext for throwing ourselves once more into the full tide of courts and of London society, and of weaning ourselves for a time from a place in which every idea for a time is poisoned respecting all our objects and projects of amusement." While he admitted the "full pretensions" of Lord Mornington, Auckland still pressed his own claim for the Privy Seal. "To me and to mine," he pleaded with the desperation of vanity, "it is essential *now,* and without emolument or advantage or the cabinet, as I said this morning. It would not perhaps be too much to add that if deferred now it ought never to be renewed."

So this romantic interruption of Pitt's strenuous life was to end with unpleasantness. Auckland again entered the Ministry in the following year as joint Postmaster-General and, outwardly at least, continued to support Pitt. But those were days of the most flagrant wire-pulling and sinister hatching of plots. Let us momentarily for convenience pass over four years. The Archbishop of Canterbury happened to be brother-in-law of Auckland, Pitt was busy with this Roman Catholic eman-

cipation policy; but ahead of time, news of this project reached George III. It is supposed that such tidings were brought through the Archbishop from Auckland. In March of that year, 1801, Auckland made a speech which Pitt regarded as questioning his honor; and nothing ever roused Pitt more than such occasions as these. From that time Pitt never spoke to him. On Pitt's resignation, when the King declined to permit the emancipation, Auckland continued as Postmaster-General under Addington, and resigned with Addington. But when Pitt returned to power, Auckland had no office. Relations continued strained. Nevertheless, it was characteristic of Pitt's magnanimity that, in order to make up the salary which this Minister thus lost, an additional government pension was settled on Lady Auckland, and the peer had the nobility to write Pitt a letter of sincere thanks.* There is evidence that Auckland was still very fond of Pitt, even in spite of all that happened. For on the day of Pitt's death he wrote to Lord Grenville a letter of condolence saying: "I deeply lament the death of one for whom I retained both respect and undiminished affection, although a misunderstanding (arising perhaps in the mutual infirmities of the human mind) had interrupted our intercourse on public subjects."†

There arises the obvious question as to why Pitt never married. To this more than one answer may be given, each sufficiently complete in itself, but when regarded conjointly overwhelmingly decisive. First, he was (to employ a colloquialism) living "all for his job." From infancy, as we have seen, he persistently set one goal before him, and toward that goal he directed all

* I am indebted to *Letters Relating to the Love Episode of William Pitt,* with an introduction by Lord Rosebery. (Printed for Private Circulation.) London, 1900.

† "Dropmore MSS."

his energies. There are some men who prefer to worship ambition rather than women; Pitt was one of this class. Moreover he had lived a life without women, and there is no evidence for supposing he understood anything about their sex. His wife was his work—as in the case of so many of the world's ablest men. All his affection, his energy, his care, his fortune were spent on his country. But, second, this was an especially critical time, when bankruptcy and ruin were facing his beloved nation. He could not for many days detach his mind from documents, despatches, memoranda, urgent correspondence. Third, he had formed firm habits of bachelordom, and it would have been an almost superhuman task to have re-formed the reformer. He loved his glass of port and his establishments at Downing Street, Hollwood and Walmer. Perhaps, too, he feared that Lord Auckland—able, ambitious, pushful, poor—would be inconvenient to have as a father-in-law as well as colleague. But fourth, we shall not forget that Pitt's health had begun to decline, and that he was terribly in debt. The last point will be discussed in detail presently.

Pitt, therefore, for his own good reasons, and at a time when he was being robbed by his servants who badly needed a mistress of the house to correct them, determined to confine his affections to his public work. Miss Eden married Lord Hobart, instead of the most outstanding and care-worn thirty-seven-year-old man, who continued to wrestle with his immense burdens that would have broken many another Minister. And for the good of his country it was perhaps as well that his concentrated attention was not affected by the distractions of family duties.

We can well believe that, with this personal anxiety out of the way, Pitt felt some relief at being able once

more to think of nothing save his destined duties of pilotage. While this romantic attachment had not come suddenly, but had caused comment even before Christmas, we may feel some doubt as to whether he would have been a suitable husband for a girl who was not long since past her nineteenth birthday. When Stanhope wrote his four-volume life of Pitt, the biographer had never seen this Auckland correspondence, and it was not available, but it is not difficult to read into it an ambitious desire on the part of Miss Eleanor's parents for the match to go through in spite of Pitt's penury. She waited another two and a half years before becoming Lord Hobart's second wife, and he in 1804 succeeded to the title of Earl of Buckinghamshire.

It is arguable that Pitt's health might have been preserved to the country for many years had he taken to himself a wife just at this period. On the other hand one so conscientious as himself would have found in her an additional reason for uneasiness. It is not always possible for a man of thirty-seven suddenly to alter his mode of life, and Pitt was many years older than his age. Moreover, he had gradually withdrawn himself more and more from social matters ever since the war had set in. This attitude would scarcely have suited a young spouse, and she would have complained that he was forever away from her side. If it could have been possible to have been assured that from this union would have descended another William Pitt to guide the fortunes of the country through the period of Canning, Wellington, Grey, Melbourne and Peel, then the incident might have taken on a different aspect. But it so happened that the Countess of Buckinghamshire died childless.

Chapter XV

MUTINY AND DISAFFECTION

From what follows it will be seen that the year 1797 was so full of historic happenings, so replete with important developments on land as well as sea, that it would have been impossible for Pitt to have combined the responsibilities of bridegroom and Prime Minister without serious neglect in at least one capacity.

In the Mediterranean there was cause for anxiety. Corsica and Elba had been taken away from Britain, and Sir John Jervis had been compelled to withdraw his naval force from the Middle Sea to Gibraltar by the end of 1796. Nelson was afraid that a general action would take place before he could join Jervis. Returning from Porto Ferrajo with a convoy for Gibraltar, he proceeded west to find his Admiral, looked into Cartagena and discovered that the Spanish fleet had sailed, yet off the mouth of Gibraltar Straits by night he passed through them. Accordingly he hurried on to warn Jervis and found him off Cape St. Vincent—Drake's old waiting area—on February 13, 1797. Next day came the Battle of St. Vincent, which was not merely a decisive and important victory that gave Jervis an Earldom, but showed the world there was in Horatio Nelson a brilliant tactician of whom more would be heard later. The Spanish officers, who survived, did not escape disgrace and being degraded in their own country for so signal a defeat.

It was good news to know that the Spanish fleet had been broken; it was pleasant to remember that in 1793 the islands of Tobago, St. Pierre, Miquelon, the French portion of St. Domingo, France's fishing establishments in Newfoundland had all been taken thanks to the British Navy; and that in the following year Martinique had

been captured; that Ceylon and the Cape of Good Hope had been taken from the Dutch in 1795. But all was not well. The heavy taxation, the large additions to the national debt, the bad harvests, the rise of the cost in living with little enough corresponding rise in wages, the spread of pauperism, the unfavorable effect on the public mind and emotions, were likely to provide a considerable crisis before long.

The failure of peace negotiations caused a run on the Bank of England whose directors appealed to Pitt for guidance. The result was that on February 26, 1797, the Privy Council, owing to the unusual demands for specie "made upon the metropolis, in consequence of ill-founded or exaggerated alarms in different parts of the country," authorized the Bank to forbear making cash payments. It was, however, soon shown that while there was a temporary deficiency in coin, the Bank possessed a big surplus. Parliament continued the suspension of paying cash, its credit was restored, and its notes were employed without any more inconvenience than occurred in the country after the introduction of notes during the war crisis of August, 1914.

Still, there is a letter dated April 9, 1797, written in the early evening from Downing Street by Pitt to the King, in which the Premier's anxiety is most clearly indicated. The Minister refers to "the present circumstances at Home and abroad," which "made it an indispensable though painful Duty to submit to your Majesty" certain opinions. He assures the King that this opinion is "not formed without cool and repeated deliberation." Pitt was disturbed concerning "the gradual and increasing Difficulties of Finance, the real and serious Hazard which may arise from their being further augmented, as well as the effect of the Impressions which they may be too

likely to produce in Parliament and with the Public."*

On the twenty-sixth of that month Pitt submitted his budget to Parliament, with the apology that he felt "considerable regret, and great personal disappointment in being compelled, however reluctantly, to propose an addition to the ample and large provision already made, towards defraying the expenses of the country in a wide and calamitous war." But its termination having been obstructed, more money was required—twelve million, six hundred and sixty-one thousand pounds for the Navy, six million, six hundred thousand pounds for the Army, and so no. He was therefore compelled to levy further taxes on such items as deeds, copyholds, law instruments, transfer of property, plate, carriages passing through turnpike-gates.

Nevertheless, through this depressing spring he was wonderfully brave, calm, cool and optimistic. He reminded the House that "we are struggling in a great contest," "labouring under pressures as heavy as they are unexampled," yet "we shall find the radical wealth and the ample means of this country fully sufficient to support us . . . and ultimately restore us." During this month he again opened negotiations for peace, and so much did he loathe all this bloodshed, all this waste of material, that he was willing to let France have either the Cape of Good Hope or Ceylon, if she would come to terms. "I feel," he wrote to Lord Carlisle on June fourth, "not less strongly than yourself the expediency of taking every step towards Peace that can be likely to effect the object consistent with the safety and Honor of the Country; and I have no difficulty in adding (for your *private* satisfaction) that steps are taken of the most direct sort, and of which we must soon know the Result, to ascertain

*"Chatham Papers," P. R. O.

whether the Disposition of the Enemy will admit of negotiation."

Meanwhile the somewhat expensive Royal Family had to be provided for. Six years previously the King had written to Pitt lamenting "extremely that the deficiency of the Civil List should arise from the Payments to the younger branches of my Family," but the Duke of York, and the future William IV could not "with the strictest economy" keep within the sum allotted them. And by August 18, 1797, another son—Prince Ernest, Duke of Cumberland—was also in trouble financially. For on that date Pitt had to write and inform George III as follows: "It is with great reluctance that Mr. Pitt presumes to trouble Y^r. Maj^ty. . . . But having lately had occasion to learn the narrowness of Prince Ernest's Income had reduced His Royal Highness to a state of such urgent embarrassment that he is on the point of finding it necessary to sell his equipages and every other article which he can dispose of," the Prime Minister suggested that a further allowance be made. The sum of two thousand five hundred pounds or three thousand pounds could be annually furnished. One might wonder at the sympathetic facility with which Pitt could always obtain an annuity for some distinguished person in distress; but it will not be out of place if we call to mind that at this present date Pitt was himself so involved that his private debts now amounted to the sum of at least thirty thousand pounds, although his relaxation consisted in nothing more extravagant than entertaining his intimate male friends, rarely dining alone, and flitting about chiefly between Downing Street, Hollwood and Walmer. He was even forced to raise a further mortgage of seven thousand pounds on his Hollwood property.* His own official in-

* Stanhope, *Life*, III, p. 4.

come amounted to ten thousand five hundred and thirty-two pounds from all sources, viz., five thousand pounds a year as First Lord of the Treasury, two thousand four hundred and fifty-two pounds a year as Chancellor of the Exchequer, and three thousand and eighty pounds as Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports.*

"Mr. Pitt," says Tomline, "from his first residence in college showed a great indifference to his own pecuniary concerns; and when he came into office, his time was so completely devoted to his public duties that he found no leisure to attend to his private affairs. The fortune which he inherited from his father was ten thousand pounds, and the Duke of Rutland, who died in 1787, left him a legacy of three thousand pounds . . . but, though not extravagant, he was generous and liberal in the extreme, and while anxious to equalize the income and expenditure of the nation, he forgot that the same thing was desirable in his own individual instance." Not merely were there the great expenses as a Minister, but he was imposed upon by tradesmen and servants. "I occasionally examined the books kept by Mr. Pitt's house-steward, which were rarely looked at by his master, and I inquired into what passed in the family. I did not fail to apprise Mr. Pitt of the state of his affairs, and to give advice, and I received fair promises of economy and retrenchment, but they were soon forgotten."†

But by September, 1797, the toils and worries were getting too much for him to bear without showing signs externally. As Stanhope informs us, Pitt now began to suffer from headaches for days together, yet he sought the solace of his troubled soul by translating one of

* Appendix C in Rosebery's *Pitt*.

† *Life*, suppressed Chapter 27.

Horace's Odes, and the following lines show in what mood his mind was just now working:—

"How bless'd, how glorious they who bravely fall,
Their lives devoted, at their country's call."

By this time negotiations with the Directory of France had so far advanced that the latter were asking for the sum of two millions sterling for the Directory's use. So anxious was Pitt for an immediate peace, that he was not unfavorably disposed to have this amount paid. "Mr. Pitt and all those whom he has consulted," he wrote to George III on September twenty-second, "think the overture not destitute of Probability and the experiment worth trying, as such a sum would be well employed indeed to procure Peace on our own terms without the Risk and expence of another Campaign." But even Pitt admitted that this measure was "quite singular," and "of doubtful success."

He was right in his forecast. That autumn saw another failure in negotiation with France, and on November 10, 1797, Parliament was given information as to what had happened during these discussions at Lille. Pitt had to explain the breakdown, though it was to disappointed ears that he was speaking. "Sir," he asked, "what was it we offered to renounce to France? In one word, all that we had taken from them." That is to say, Martinique, the other West Indian possessions, St. Domingo, St. Lucia, Tobago, St. Pierre and Miquelon, and the French East Indian territory. "And," reasoned Pitt, "for what were these renunciations to be made? For peace, and for peace only." But, he had sorrowfully to add, the French had presented "such insolent and unwarrantable demands" that these negotiations had entirely failed.

And during this year came another series of blows, yet from the least suspected quarter. Throughout the last two hundred years the nation had regarded its Navy with respect and affection, had relied upon its integrity as the one unfailing hope of defense in time of trouble. As the loyal crews had brought victory against the Armada, emerged triumphant through the three Anglo-Dutch wars, and now formed the only powerful weapon against France, so the sailor was beloved by the people and his shore excesses condoned. He was looked on as a rollicking good fellow, worth three Frenchman any day of the week, and ready to die for his King. It therefore came as a terrible shock when this naval protection, following so shortly after the St. Vincent victory, seemed destined to dissolve into nothing but disorder.

It was on April 15, 1797, that the first naval mutiny occurred at Spithead, just as Lord Bridport was about to take the Channel Fleet to sea. (Nominally Lord Howe was still commander-in-chief, though actually the duties were carried out by Bridport, his second-in-command.) At the end of February the crews of four capital ships had petitioned Howe to obtain from the Admiralty a relief from their grievances. But Howe was a sick septuagenarian, within two years of his death, and referred the matter to Bridport who made light of the affair. Howe therefore did nothing, so, likewise, the men did nothing when that April day the signal was made to weigh anchor. Every capstan in the fleet remained still. And next the men broke out into open mutiny, taking command of the ships, in much the same way that the German Fleet in the autumn of 1918 rebelled. But there was not the slightest doubt that the British sailors had every reason to complain; they had been made to suffer too long.

Lieutenant Philip Beaver, an officer aboard one of these vessels, wrote two days later that the men were "not dissatisfied with their officers or the service, but are determined to have an increase of pay, because it has not been increased since the time of Charles the First, and that everything since that period has risen 50 per cent., that no attention had been paid to their petitions, and that on the resignation of Lord Howe they were forced to pursue the present measures." Moreover the crews were at the mercy of the pursers, who cheated the men without mercy. Eventually these statements were seen by the Admiralty to be well-founded, all demands were granted, and a free pardon given to the mutineers. It was, however, not till they had again hoisted the red flag on May seventh, and Lord Howe himself had to go down to Portsmouth with full powers from Pitt's Cabinet to ratify all concessions made, that the men were satisfied. But they trusted him under whom they had served at the Glorious First of June battle. A similar outbreak at Plymouth ended in submission, yet although Howe removed certain unpopular officers, the trouble was not entirely obliterated.

For, a few days later, another mutiny broke out at the Nore, but this time led by a man named Parker, who had a bad record in the service and had been well supplied recently with money after being discharged from Edinburgh jail where he had been confined for debt. Thus the spread of revolutionary principles had not been kept wholly to France. Parker had secretly rejoined the Navy and, assisted by some of the London revolutionary societies, had fomented discontent among the Nore crews. By the end of the month the situation became worse when eleven of Admiral Duncan's ships, about to sail from Great Yarmouth to blockade the Texel, deserted, turned

back to the Thames and joined Parker. The latter now talked like a megalomaniac, and threatened to sail up the river to London. The metropolis became panic-stricken, shipowners and merchants filled with wild alarm. What with this, and the general gloomy outlook under the cloud of war, consols dropped to forty-eight, and the nation feared for the worst. At any moment the Dutch were expected to make an invasion; but by a piece of clever bluff Duncan, with only two ships and a cutter, and by openly making signals in the offing, concealed his weakness from the Dutchmen.

How, then, did Pitt and his Cabinet act in this momentous difficulty? It seemed, indeed, as if there could be no trouble left to be added to his shoulders, whether public or private, national or international. But still his cool calm firmness never deserted him. He was accustomed not merely to be titular head, but the real controller of those several departments which included the Admiralty. So, while the Thames buoys were removed as a precaution and the river forts heavily armed against Parker's pretensions, some of the Lords of the Admiralty were sent down to the Nore but found Parker so insolent that they returned to town. Thereupon Pitt himself brought in a bill on June second, for preventing and punishing sedition and mutiny occurring in His Majesty's service. It was not exactly a pleasant task, but Pitt informed the Commons that "many and various have been the attempts to excite this disaffection," and that "where to the honour of the soldiery . . . they had failed in their effects . . . in the Navy . . . they had unfortunately prevailed."

Parliament with scarcely any opposition approved, and by the end of a week Parker found his influence dwindling. The Portsmouth and Plymouth crews dis-

EARL HOWE

Commander-in-Chief, North American Station, forced the passage of the Delaware, 1777. Commander-in-Chief at the "Glorious First of June," 1794. Pacified the Portsmouth mutineers, 1797.

owned him, and it availed him little that he hoisted at the yard-arm the effigies of Pitt and Dundas. Individual ships began to haul down their red flags, and finally, by the fourteenth, Parker's previous supporters surrendered the megalomaniac, who was tried, convicted and then hanged before the month was out. So far as home waters were concerned, the disaffection was practically finished. Lord St. Vincent in the Mediterranean fleet, off the coast of Portugal, with merciless severity hanged his mutineers and crushed the spirit dead. A similar trouble occurred on the Cape of Good Hope station, as well as in the West Indies, and was drastically terminated. So, at length, internal peace was restored and the same men who a few months previously had resisted all authority were now most gallantly again adding victories to their country's history.

Every officer who has commanded ships of war well knows that nothing so kills grumbling as to provide the crews with active service. That which they can not stand is monotony, and one cause of trouble in the spring of 1797 was stoppage of leave, necessitating weary habitation on board with no special excitement. Such incidents as the Glorious First of June and Cape St. Vincent battles had the most excellent outlets for men bored with dull ship life. So, now that Holland was about to attempt a big coup, Duncan found some of his old ships and men only too eager to aid him. With a fleet of nineteen vessels, plus some smaller craft, the Dutch Vice-Admiral De Winter was to leave the Texel, join the French at Brest and attempt another invasion of Ireland. It was Duncan's duty to prevent De Winter.

During September Duncan, lively, genial and full of energy, was with his ships for a time anchored in the Downs, and this gave him frequent opportunities of

coming ashore to see Pitt at Walmer Castle. During the next month, while the Kentish ozone, the game shooting, and Farquhar's medical prescription were combining to restore the Premier's health, and enable the nation's leader to think out his next budget, Duncan was being buffeted by the equinoctial gales in the shallow sandy waters of Holland, watching to keep the Dutch fleet from coming out. But many of his ships having been strained by the bad weather and being in need of provisions, the British Admiral ran back into Yarmouth Roads. This unfortunately allowed De Winter to emerge. However, one of Duncan's frigates brought her Admiral the tidings, and the latter came forth speedily. Off the Dutch village of Camperdown an engagement was fought, in which victory was won so decisively that eleven of the enemy's vessels became Duncan's prizes. Duncan was made a Viscount and given a pension, but the satisfaction for the nation was that it signalized once more the achievements of the British Navy, and it was not without political effect on France. The invasion scheme had been thwarted.

Still, there was every need for this ray of hope that had partially illumined the national gloom; for never had the public confidence sunk so low since the end of the war with America. And now the French Directory were making no secret of the intention to invade England under Bonaparte next year. Before the end of October, 1797, Pitt was back at Downing Street from Walmer, and there is to be found among the "Dropmore Manuscripts" a financial minute made on the twenty-fifth of that month, showing how his mind was juggling with figures to find the necessary means for carrying on the war. "Supposing the war to be protracted for another campaign beyond 1798," it ran, "the amount of the supply for 1799 beyond the ordinary peace expenditure may be estimated at

nineteen million pounds." Of this amount one million pounds was to be furnished by the Bank of England, ten million pounds to be obtained by loan, and eight million pounds to come from the taxes of 1798.

In the next month, then, we find Pitt announcing a very serious budget, with a deficiency of nineteen million pounds. This sum necessitated, besides loans, the triple assessment of those who were already paying taxes, and not unnaturally the nation considered the proceeding to be oppressive. A ready opportunity for their protests was found shortly. On December nineteenth was held in St. Paul's Cathedral a public thanksgiving for the recent naval victories. This was attended as usual by the King, Royal Family, the Cabinet and others in solemn procession. But so great was the crowd's outburst against Pitt, so loud the hooting, so vehement the insults, that when the service was over it was not considered safe for him to return home. He remained behind to dine in Doctors' Commons, adjoining St. Paul's churchyard, and had to be escorted to Downing Street later by Light Horse. Such are the fluctuations of uncertain popularity!

But just as during the war of 1914-18 nothing so unified the British nation as the peril of invasion by sea or air, so during 1798 ill-humor was forgotten in the determined resolve to prevent the French from landing in this country. There could be no doubt as to the threat, and on April 20, 1798, Parliament was informed that in the ports of France, Flanders and Holland also, preparations were being made for embarking troops as well as warlike stores. Actually, however, Bonaparte had by the end of February turned his attention from an invasion of England to conquest in the East. Originally he had aimed to strike a blow at England by sending an army to her shores from various places between Havre

and the Texel, making every use of night and thick weather.

To have done this would have been to rely on a mere gamble, for France did not possess command of the sea, and therefore the transit of her troops would be extremely risky. Very wisely he abandoned this doubtful scheme, though the fear of invasion kept England in a nervous state of suspense and necessitated a large reserve of ships as well as seamen being retained in home waters.

On the other hand we have to remember that Britain had evacuated the Mediterranean long since, and that notwithstanding the battle of St. Vincent no British squadron had entered through the Gibraltar Straits. What with the Dutch fleet in the North Sea, the French fleet in Brest, and the Spanish fleet in Cadiz, she had no ships to spare for blockading Toulon and hindering French operations in Italy. Moreover, supplies not being available locally, convoys would have been requisite and protection necessary over a long line. That, again, would have meant more ship units.

Napoleon, having dismissed the invasion plan, set before his mind the conquest of Egypt, whence his road would be clear to India that was to form part of a huge Napoleonic Eastern Empire and include Turkey. It was to swallow up the vast organization of the East India Company and the richest treasure-house in the world. So this spring, while he was working out the details for seizing Egypt, the invasion bogey was still allowed its fullest freedom in promulgation, and (further to keep the British fleet occupied) the Spanish fleet was to keep Lord St. Vincent located in the neighborhood of Cadiz. Thus, with the command of the Mediterranean in French hands, it was a perfectly sound strategy to send thirty-five thousand troops across.

On May third Napoleon left Paris, and on May nineteenth the expedition began to move out of Toulon southward. Meanwhile all this naval activity at Toulon had caused considerable anxiety to Pitt's government. What was it all about? What was going to happen? Was a French fleet coming forth to invade Ireland? Lord St. Vincent accordingly sent Nelson with a small squadron to find out. On May seventeenth the latter arrived off Toulon, captured a French corvette, from which he obtained partial intelligence, but was unable to learn the destination of the expedition. The latter, however, was on June ninth off Malta, which surrendered to the French, who ten days later sailed eastward.

Nelson was to learn that the expedition had slipped through his fingers, but on June seventh Troubridge joined him with eleven more ships, and a week later at Cività Vecchia Nelson received information that the enemy had been sighted southwest of Sicily steering east. It was on the seventeenth he learned that the enemy had reached Malta, but on the twenty-second, when he was off Cape Passaro, he only knew that they had quitted Malta. Whither had they sailed? All that he had found in May was that in Toulon were forty-four ships of war and two hundred transports. He had then sent a sloop to advise Lord St. Vincent, but his own squadron was driven out of the Gulf of Lyons by a gale and Nelson's flagship almost wrecked on Sardinia. After refitting and returning toward Toulon, Nelson had discovered he was too late: the enemy were gone.

So the latter part of June saw Nelson wondering and reasoning. He concluded rightly that Napoleon was bound for Egypt, and accordingly made off under all canvas for Alexandria. The discernment was all the more able since there had been no mention of Egypt in St.

Vincent's instructions. Ireland? Yes. Portugal? Probably. The two Sicilies? Quite likely. But Egypt? This invasion had not been contemplated.

On June twenty-seventh, when off Crete, Napoleon learned from a frigate that Nelson had called at Naples on the seventeenth. The former now turned south, on July first arrived off Alexandria and began to disembark his troops. Nelson, indeed, had arrived off Alexandria on June twenty-eighth, but was completely baffled by not seeing the French there; so began sweeping the eastern Mediterranean for the next few weeks, completely at a loss. Thus, by only three days did the British and French fail to meet; otherwise, the unfortunate soldiers in transports would have experienced destruction. But as it happened, the army disembarked at Alexandria with safety, marched south, defeated the Mamelukes (the race—originally Turkish slaves—which now ruled Egypt) at the battle of the Pyramids on July twenty-first, and then four days later Napoleon entered Cairo, proceeding next to conquer Lower Egypt.

But the amazing thing about this expedition is that neither Napoleon, nor the French Admiral, Brueys, realized that the French fleet should now be employed to seek the British fleet in battle. Alexandria, being the gateway of supplies for the French Army, would surely soon be blockaded by Nelson. Brueys, however, took his fleet into Abukir Bay, where he anchored them in single-line head. Here on the first of August Nelson sighted them. Five hours later the battle began. It ended in complete annihilation for the French; for of Brueys' thirteen capital ships, two finished in flames, eight surrendered, one got ashore and only two escaped. This Battle of the Nile, as it is always known, had the effect of ruining all Napoleon's plans, for it stopped any possibility of sup-

plies reaching his troops. It saved India, it freed the British fleet in the Mediterranean for any other operations that might arise, and it was the biggest shock that France had so far received against her scheme for aggrandizement. Napoleon, being a soldier and not a sailor, had committed his expedition to a false plan; he had blundered badly, and was lucky some months later to escape in a frigate, owing to the temporary absence of the blockading squadron which had sailed to Cyprus to get fresh water.

But we must go back for a while to London. While Nelson was cruising and trying to gather information, Pitt was arranging to provide for the Navy more men. In plain language this meant enlarging the scope of the press gangs. So, on May 25, 1798, Pitt introduced a bill, and because of what he called the "alarming situation of the country," he wanted that bill to proceed through all its stages in one day. (There were on the outbreak of war fifteen thousand seamen in the Navy, but during the first year Pitt raised this number to seventy thousand, and eventually the figures rose to one hundred and thirty-five thousand. This alone indicates the contrast between his peace and war policies.)

Now Pitt's motion this date in May was opposed by Mr. George Tierney. The latter was a couple of years younger than the Premier, and was representative of that new wealthy mercantile class which had begun to spring up in England as a result of the national prosperity. Tierney had been educated at Eton and Cambridge, and called to the Bar. He was one of Fox's supporters, but Fox and most of his followers had now, for the most part, given up attending the House of Commons, believing that Pitt's policy was incompatible with liberty. Not so Tierney; he insisted on appearing in the House and thus

became Pitt's prominent opponent in debates. On this occasion Tierney complained of the "very extraordinary and precipitate manner" in which Pitt was hurrying forward the bill. "I must view all the measures of Ministers as hostile to the liberty of the subject."

Let it be recollected that Pitt was not in the best of health. He was overworked, he was harassed by what he thought was an impending invasion, and he had no other outlet for his emotions than to indulge in too much port. Men faced with problems so profound and difficulties so burdensome as beset this Premier, will seek for some temporary relief in ways peculiar to their own temperament. The individual of keen religious feeling will bear it all stoically and find consolation in self-sacrifice. The undisciplined profligate will resort to vice. The artistic mind will find forgetfulness in music or in color. But Pitt, being what he was, had nothing to fall back on except his decanter; and that was ruining his stomach, thereby undermining his health generally.

To-day it was manifest that his temper was also affected. To Tierney he replied caustically that, "if every measure adopted against the designs of France is to be considered as hostile to the liberty of this country, then indeed my idea of liberty differs very widely from that to be entertained by the honorable gentleman." He even suggested that Tierney would retard the progress of this motion through the House. "How can the honorable gentleman's opposition to it be accounted for, but from a desire to obstruct the defence of the country?"

This was the rhetoric not of a tactful Pitt, but of a very tired human being. But it stung Tierney as with a whip. Instantly Tierney's Irish blood tingled, he jumped to his feet and called the Premier to order. "This language, Sir, is surely not Parliamentary; and upon you

only can I call for protection," he addressed the Speaker of the House of Commons. Mr. Speaker—the Henry Addington of Pitt's boyhood friendship—then observed that whatever had a tendency to throw suspicion on the sentiments of a member, if conveyed in language that clearly marked that intention, was without doubt irregular and unparliamentary.

Pitt, however, was in a thoroughly implacable mood; he was thinking of nothing whatsoever but the country's peril. "I know very well that it is unparliamentary," he answered, "to state the motives that actuate the opinions of gentlemen, but it is impossible to go into arguments in favor of a question without sometimes hinting at the motives that induced an opposition to it." He firmly declined to retract or explain. This was a Friday, and the upshot was that Tierney promptly challenged Pitt to fight a duel. On the Sunday afternoon at three o'clock on Putney Heath, not far from where Pitt had once lived, and in the vicinity of where in a very few years he was to breathe his last breath, the meeting took place. Pitt was accompanied by Mr. Dudley Ryder (afterwards Lord Harrowby); and Tierney by Sir George Walpole. After these seconds had failed to bring about reconciliation, the duelists took their ground at twelve paces. A case of pistols was then fired simultaneously, but without effect. Another pair was fired also, though Pitt fired his into the air. Upon this the seconds interfered, the duel was stopped and it was declared that the honor of both parties had been appeased.

Addington was present at this regrettable incident as a spectator. While Pitt had no alternative but to accept the challenge, and made his will just in time, there were not wanting those among Tierney's friends who criticized Tierney severely; he should never have challenged the

Premier to a duel, for Pitt had said things equally biting to every one of them at different times. And distinguished men like the Earl of Mornington felt that Pitt's heroism had been disgraced in being opposed "to so base-born an antagonist."* Eventually there came an amusing comment from the Advocate-General of Bengal, who had invested his entire fortune in English three-per-cent. consols, and wrote: "I do not understand by what right Mr. Pitt has suffered Mr. Tierney to fire two shots at my three-per-cent. consols." Nor did Pitt forget his old mother. On the Monday, seeing that the newspapers contained an account of this sensational incident, he sent a letter to Burton Pynsent that she might know he was alive and well.

After all this excitement of many months, culminating in what might so easily have been a tragedy for himself and the country, Pitt was again ill during June. By the next month he had eased up drinking so much. Though Tierney's conduct had deeply offended the Fox party, he still maintained his enmity for the Premier and kept up his attacks in the Commons. But the Battle of the Nile was more than a mere victory, and its wide-extending consequences could not be immediately reckoned. Generally it revived hopes where there had been pessimism, and it enabled a second coalition to be formed against France. Thus by the end of 1798 Great Britain was allied with Portugal, Naples, Russia, the Porte and (shortly afterwards) Austria. This once more meant heavy expense for Britain. In the following year Russia represented an item of eight hundred and twenty-five thousand pounds.

Pitt's Kentish castle by the sea, with its quiet, its sunshine and partridges not far away, still attracted the

* "Dropmore MSS."

Premier when he could get there. And in a letter written on September 13, 1798, from Downing Street, he informs his sister-in-law, Lady Chatham, that "I am now in a day or two returning to Walmer, with a shooting party." Never was a sinecure so invaluable to the State as this Lord Wardenship; for it is hardly overstating the case to assert that, without this refreshing retreat, Pitt's health would not have been able to keep on guiding the nation's progress through all these tremendous years. George III just now was anxious about the health of Pitt, and sending him practical advice as to the treatment of gout, but the Prime Minister was far too occupied to take much notice. For, to increase his troubles, this year witnessed an insurrection in Ireland.

Most British Premiers have been sensitive to the Irish problem, but to Pitt, with his ear open to hear of injustice, the whole subject of Ireland's reform and emancipation was always appealing for attention. Perhaps the fundamental difficulty through long years even to the present day is that, while the Irish regard the British as strangers and neighbors with whom intimate friendship is impracticable, Ireland has appeared to the British mind as a recurring inconvenience, a distant relative always wanting relief, a wayward being whose ardent enthusiasm is not to be comprehended. The Irish mind is by nature politically disposed; it is romantic, adventurous, readily roused to fight for a cause. The Briton's temperament is rather to rely on undisturbed government, to let well alone, to preserve an equable poise, to respond slowly when invited to perform emotional acts.

Now, four years after Pitt came into the world there was born in Dublin Theobald Wolfe Tone, who, after a romantic elopement in his earlier days, was to represent in his ardor all the hatred against England which could

be stirred up by faith and politics. The principles of the French Revolution had made Ireland frantic with the desire for liberty, equality, and emancipation from British rule. The unfortunate Fitzwilliam recall of 1795 had infuriated the Irish, who complained of bad faith. Just as in 1916 Britain's enemy, Germany, was invited to help, so in 1795 Wolfe Tone set forth by way of the United States to reach France and ask assistance. After reaching Wilmington, on the Delaware, he sailed from America on New Year's Day, 1796, landed at Havre and so went on to Paris. There followed discussions with the French Foreign Minister and long delays, yet he was not only able to inspire the Bantry Bay attempt that failed, but himself had accompanied Hoche. After returning to France, Tone was to have sailed forth with De Winter's expedition, and was for some time aboard. This also was delayed from July to October, and (as we have seen) finally was thwarted by Duncan's victory off Camperdown.

Tone, however, still pursued his energetic efforts to keep France interested in the help which Ireland desired. At the beginning of 1798 an independent insurrection under the leadership of an unusual personality, Lord Edward Fitzgerald, occurred, but it was not wiped out by the arrest and mortal wound of this ducal son. While a plot to seize Dublin Castle failed, a violent rising took place in Wicklow and Wexford. When this was over a small body of French troops landed in Mayo, but eventually had to surrender. Wolfe Tone had never quite succeeded in winning Bonaparte's full enthusiasm for these Irish schemes; moreover Napoleon had started off in May, too full of Egypt and the Far East to bother about petty incursions.

Still, Tone kept dogging away at the Paris authorities,

and on September 20, 1798, accompanied a small French squadron with three thousand men from Brest. They did not have much good fortune. On October tenth they were off Lough Swilly, but an English squadron met them, defeated them and took Tone prisoner. The latter was tried and condemned, but before he could be executed he cut his throat with a pen-knife and, after lingering a while, expired. It was this rebellion which once more set Pitt's mind working toward some constructive and definitive method of Anglo-Irish peace. He wanted tranquillity, not merely to enable him to keep his eyes on fighting French aggrandizement, but because he desired unity and prosperity. Nor was that all. In his view there must be an end to all disabilities, the Roman Catholics ought to enjoy emancipation, they were entitled to sit in Parliament and hold office, and the way to achieve this single coherence, this consolidation, was to join Ireland with England in a united Parliament. Thus, he contemplated, there would be an end to all these rebellions, risings, insurrections and invitations to French troops. But, as we shall presently observe, Pitt failed to comprehend the Irish psychology, and he failed to go about the business in the proper manner.

Chapter XVI

THE PROBLEM OF PEACE

As a means of counteracting and defeating France's design for separating Ireland from England, Pitt introduced his plan on January 23, 1799, to an interested House of Commons. "I have thought a great deal upon this subject," he told them. "I see this case so plainly, and I feel it so strongly."

That was nothing but a sincere expression. He believed that until the Union of Great Britain with Ireland actually became fact there would always be trouble. He wanted the Union to be a blessing to both countries, and to be for the good of the Empire as a whole. While we can see in this a gesture from Pitt to make up for the vagueness which had caused such irritation when Fitzwilliam was recalled, yet the Premier was faced with the impossibility of satisfying every faction. His own Cabinet were opposed to his granting emancipation; and those Irishmen who happened not to be Roman Catholic were against this union because at present they were the virtual rulers of Ireland; while Lord Cornwallis, the Viceroy, and Lord Castlereagh, Chief Secretary for Ireland, were energetically in favor of both union and emancipation. There was, too, the obvious reluctance for Ireland to allow her own Parliament being dissolved in favor of one united assembly sitting in Westminster.

At last Pitt surmounted obstacles by the free use of money. If he was not directly responsible for employing bribery in securing the Irish Parliament's agreement to its own decease, if to Cornwallis and Castlereagh the real blame more closely pertains, then the British Prime Minister was not wholly free from moral culpability. It cost him, too, a number of peerages as well as promotions in

their ranks. But Pitt's attitude was that Anglo-Irish settlement and stability were so vitally important just now that it was justifiable to pay a heavy price. Next year (in July) the union became an accomplished fact, and the first Imperial Parliament met on January 22, 1801. The emancipation question was to come up shortly afterwards.

Meanwhile British finance still occupied Pitt's mind as one perpetual problem. In 1798 he had appealed to the country to submit to a triple assessment, under which all taxpayers were to pay at least thrice as much as they had yielded in the previous year. He asked further for all who could afford it to subscribe voluntarily toward the national expenses, and by this means he collected over two million pounds. On the third of December in that year he tactfully flattered Parliament at the introduction of his latest budget. "You will feel," he said, "that it is not only to the splendour of your arms, to the achievements of your fleets, that you are indebted for the high distinction which you at present enjoy; but also to the wisdom of the councils you have adopted." There had, however, been some considerable evasion of the assessment, and it was necessary now to levy taxes on income as well as property. Next year, and in 1800, further loans had to be made, but still the prosperity of the nation —war-time though it was—continued so healthily, that all financial peril was passed.

This extraordinary rise of sea-borne commerce and corresponding increase of wealth as each war year went on accompanied by heavier taxation and further borrowing of money is a phenomenon deserving of study by economists. A comparison with the condition of commerce during the great European War of 1914-18, in especial regard to the effect of submarine concentration

against merchant ships, is not uninstructive. By January 14, 1795, that is to say before the first two years of hostilities were over, the Directory acknowledged that there was not a single mercantile vessel trading under the French flag. In other words, the sea was no longer the means for trade. And, by the time Pitt went out of office, British sailorhood had taken or destroyed no fewer than eight hundred thirty-four privateers, quite apart from purely naval craft.

The risks to British merchantmen were thus not such as to suffer them to give up their service. On the contrary, the seizure of enemy possessions provided entirely new markets for those manufactures which were so rapidly multiplying in Britain with the growth of the industrial revolution. While France lost communications no less than colonies, thanks to Pitt's method of employing the British naval forces, Britain could carry on the war almost indefinitely, wasting huge sums on subsidizing allies that were generally useless, spending enormous amounts to extend squadrons into fleets, and keeping the nation from protesting too clamorously. In this sense the longer the war, the greater the scope for merchants to pile up fortunes. But for this, Britain could not have gone on for nine years. It would have been impossible financially, and the violent outbursts of public opinion must have forced Pitt into peace with France.

Britain's population had not allowed of her owning an army numerically great, but it was what Dundas called "the unfaithful execution" of the obligations by the military allies on the continent that created an aversion in England against renewing any more of these treaties. Nor did Russia or Austria realize that the expensive British Mediterranean fleet was in itself a full contribution toward the continental struggle. It was, conse-

quently, acceptable news when Alexander Suwarrow (the brilliant Russian general who rose from the ranks and was never defeated, even by Napoleon) assisted the Austrians to drive the French out of Italy. In this same year, 1799, the trouble caused by the French in India had culminated happily for British arms in the taking of Seringapatam.

During May, 1799, Pitt, Dundas as Secretary for War, and the other members of the Cabinet were being kept in a state of suspense as to the objective of Admiral Bruix's fleet, which escaped out of Brest at the end of April. While Bruix's cruise failed to achieve great results, it had disturbing effect. On May third Pitt and Dundas were convinced that the fleet was bound for the Mediterranean, though there was a possibility that Ireland was the intended area. On May tenth both Pitt and Lord Grenville had made up their minds that it was Ireland after all. The Premier was staying with the latter at Dropmore, where Grenville had had his seat since five years before. Two miles away from Burnham in Buckinghamshire, it had been made attractive by a wonderful avenue of Lebanon cedars, and here in the spring sunshine glinting on new foliage the Foreign Secretary was cooperating with his relative, the Prime Minister, to deduce the true destination. On May eleventh Pitt writes from Dropmore to Lord Spencer at the Admiralty that there seemed little doubt but that the enemy's object "is a junction with the Spanish force at Ferrol."* The letter is clearly the result of the two statesmen's consultation. "Lord Grenville and I think . . . " "Lord Grenville and I both think . . . " "We state these ideas as they occur to us. . . . "

* *Private Papers of George, Second Earl Spencer,* N. R. S. Vol. III, London, 1924.

It was the far-reaching possibilities of French squadrons escaping from Brest, taking supplies to the French Army marooned in Egypt, or rendering valuable aid in Italy, even creating grave results off India or the West Indies, that made both Pitt and Dundas so anxious for an opportunity of destroying the enemy's ships in their harbors. Thus, when the Franco-Spanish fleet had entered Brest in August, 1799, after creating a period of three anxious months, Pitt and his colleagues were longing to attack Brest as soon as the operation was feasible.

The beginning of this month found Pitt at Walmer, where Dundas was his guest. In the Downs lay part of the British Navy about to get under way on August thirteenth; and there is a postscript to a letter from Dundas of August twelfth sent to Lord Spencer which shows the Premier's practical interest. "Mr. Pitt proposes being in town to-morrow evening. He proposes to be up at five to see all the armament under sail, which, by a letter I have from Admiral Mitchell, will not be sooner than that time to-morrow morning."* Having reached Downing Street, Pitt and Dundas went into consultation with naval and military officers as to the proposal of attacking Brest. On August twenty-second Pitt sent from Bromley Hill a secret memorandum for Lord Spencer, dined that night with Lord Hood at Greenwich, came up to Downing Street the same evening, and next day sent the following letter† to General Sir Charles Grey:

Dear Sir,

You will not wonder that the circumstances of the present moment have strongly recalled to Mr. Dundas's mind and mine the conversations which we have

* *Private Papers of George, Second Earl Spencer,* N. R. S. Vol. III, London, 1924.

† "Chatham Papers," P. R. O.

at different times held with you, respecting the possibility of a successful stroke against Brest. The assemblage of the combined Fleets in that Port renders such an object more tempting than ever. We have a Prospect, if the expedition in Holland should terminate speedily, of having a large Army of thirty thousand men at least, and a large Body of Marines, with any number of sail of the Line that may be thought necessary, applicable to such a Service, by the month of October; and if the Allies continue to push their operations on the other side of France, the Bulk of the French Force will find sufficient occupation at a distance from their coast. In all these respects the Time seems as favourable as it can ever be expected to be, to such an Enterprize; and if it is to be undertaken, we shall derive the greatest confidence of success, from seeing the execution of it placed in your Hands. . . . I am the more anxious to see you without delay, as Lord Spencer is going down to see the Fleet in Torbay. . . .

It is evidence of the way Pitt used to drive about the country, even over the jolting roads of that time, when we note that on August twenty-seventh he was already back at Walmer. But he and Dundas were to be disappointed. Sir Charles Grey considered that the requisite land force would have to be "much larger than that on which we originally formed our calculation." The plan was still being discussed during the winter, but by January 11, 1800, it was finally dropped.

Now those days spent at Walmer in August, 1799, were no mere summer holiday. Pitt and Dundas were, at the time of exploring the Brest project, deeply involved in the Helder expedition. The object of the latter was to act as a diversion on behalf of the Austrians and Russian military operations in Switzerland, to drive the French out of Holland, and obtain possession of the Dutch Navy. An Anglo-Russian treaty had been signed at the end of 1798, whereby Russia was to supply forty-

five thousand men wherever required, and Britain was to pay a subsidy monthly. Reports from spies had roused hopes that the Dutch were ready to rise against the French in Holland.

In command of the British squadron Vice-Admiral Andrew Mitchell (just mentioned) was appointed by the Admiralty, and their Lordships instructed him beginning as follows:

His Majesty having determined, in conjunction with his Ally the Emperor of Russia, to rescue the United Provinces of Holland from the oppressive tyranny of the French Republic, and to restore to them their independence and their former Government, his Majesty has appointed Lieutenant-General Sir Ralph Abercromby, K.B., to command the first division of the land forces intended to be employed on this service. And we having appointed you to command the squadron which is to co-operate with the army, we send you the following instructions. . . .

On August sixth Dundas, Mitchell and Abercromby had a conference at Canterbury. Bad weather delayed the embarkation of troops at Deal, but by the eleventh it had lined up and Pitt was sailing about the Downs in his yacht inspecting the fleet,* before seeing them get under way two days later. An impressive sight it was to see the armada of artillery transports, victualing transports, cavalry transports, hospital ships, all disposed in three divisions, escorted by men-of-war and revenue cutters; the whole expedition numbering two hundred sail. But this expedition was not an entire success. While it served to destroy the rest of the Dutch fleet which had escaped from Duncan at the Battle of Camperdown, otherwise little can be claimed. Bad weather experienced off the Helder delayed disembarkation; the Dutch were not in-

* "Spencer Papers," III, p. 163.

HELDER EXPEDITION, 1799

Showing Sir Ralph Abercromby's troops landing in Holland in August 27, 1799, covered by Vice-Admiral Mitchell's fleet.

clined to rise; George III's incompetent son, the Duke of York, was again in command of the Army, with Pitt's brother, Lord Chatham, under him in command of a brigade; so that once more there came military failure, and the Duke capitulated. He was lucky to have been allowed to withdraw and get safely back to England, where he was to be mixed up in an unpleasant scandal ten years later.

For the comparatively limited success at great expense obtained from this Helder expedition, by the end of October Pitt had to endure the sarcastic criticism of Sheridan in the House of Commons. The latter pointed to "gross negligence," "ignorance," "misconduct" of those responsible for the failure; and there can be no doubt but that Sheridan was justified in such remarks. While it is easy enough to accuse Pitt of being inferior to his father as a war Premier, we shall not forget that the son's métier was reform and construction, finance and economy, rather than belligerence. But now, all of a sudden, came a ray of hope.

It had been a miserable summer, accompanied by gales of wind, rain and cold, which had meant another bad harvest, with the price of corn and meat raised, necessitating great distress among England's poor. On New Year's Day, 1800, Pitt was seated in Downing Street, looking back on the past twelvemonths and writing a letter to his brother, Lord Chatham, who was now in his native country; in this note he makes mention of another more important missive:*

My dear Brother,

A year full of extraordinary events has closed with a letter from the Consul Bonaparte to the King containing an overture for Negotiation, which

* "Chatham Papers," P. R. O.

arrived yesterday. [This had been brought by] a common courier, who arrived without a Passport in a Neutral vessel at Dover, where he was of course detained and his Letters sent forward. There can I imagine be no doubt in any one's mind that the substance of the answer to be returned, must be to decline any Negotiation at the present moment, on the ground that the actual state of France does not as yet seem to furnish any ground of solid security from any Treaty that could be now formed.

Ever affectionately yours

W. P.

Napoleon's letter was dated *"Paris 5 Nivoise* [December 25], *1799."* It was addressed *"A Sa Majesté Le Roi de la Grande Bretagne et d'Irlande,"* and contained the following question: *"La Guerre qui depuis huit ans ravage les quatre parties du Monde, doit elle être eternelle? . . . Votre Majesté ne verra dans cette ouverture que mon desir sincere de contribuer efficacement pour la seconde fois à la pacification generale. . . .*

Bonaparte."

"Must the war go on for ever?" No one was so eager for calm as Pitt, yet again and again he had convinced himself that nothing but a lasting peace, rather than a cessation from hostilities, was likely to afford any good. Moreover, even assuming Napoleon was genuinely sincere, this wish had come so soon after the new continental coalition had been stabilized, that the French move seemed suspicious; it might be Bonaparte's plan first to smash this alliance, then break off negotiations and resume war. After consideration, Lord Grenville as Foreign Minister declined with Pitt's approval this invitation. The reply stated that it was useless to negotiate until those causes which brought about the war had now ceased. A weaker British Government might have taken this as an excellent opportunity to settle matters and end

the unpopular taxation at the end of an unusually depressing year, which had hit the merchants of Lancashire so heavily that Pitt had to get a bill passed allowing them a loan of five hundred thousand pounds.

But, happily, Pitt realized that Napoleon was merely intriguing, trying to win by his deceit and perfidy a delay that could give time for preparing new armies. On January 22, 1800, Parliament was informed of this refusal, and on February third the House of Commons was surprised to see that now rare occasion of Fox and friends present. The former condemned the rejection of Bonaparte's application, and criticized the Pitt policy as proceeding from a haughty and hostile spirit. Pitt, on the other hand, defended his position most ably. He referred to Britain's improved credit; to "the continued triumphs of our powerful and victorious Navy, and the events which, in the course of the last two years, have raised the military ardor and military glory of the country to a height unexampled in any period of our history." He compared it with France's present difficult position in regard to men, money, supplies. "We should be inexcusable," he drove home, "if at this moment we were to relinquish the struggle on any grounds short of entire and complete security against the greatest danger which has ever yet threatened the world." And longingly as Parliament wanted the war to end, they were so heartily in agreement with what Pitt and Grenville had done in the matter that they registered their approval by two hundred and sixty-five votes to sixty-four.

No wonder that Fox and his supporters found it almost a waste of time to keep on attending with their despised minority.

But this did not prevent Pitt's personal enemy, Tierney, from carrying on his sharp-shooting. A fortnight later he challenged the Premier to define in one sentence,

without any *ifs* and *buts,* the real aim and object of the war. It was on just such an occasion as this that Pitt was always capable of employing his icy manner with the neatest result. He froze Tierney in the fewest words. "I know not whether I can do it in one sentence," Pitt replied: "but in one word, I can tell him it is *Security.*"

There must have been moments during this year, none the less, when Pitt's mind was again compelled to reconsider his attitude. No wonder that Pitt's hair had lately become almost white. Suwarrow's campaign had failed in Switzerland, Russia withdrew from further cooperation, Austria was completely defeated by Napoleon at the Battle of Marengo in June, 1800, and the Second Coalition ceased to exist, for all the millions of pounds Pitt had spent in foreign subsidies since 1793. But in 1800 Britain captured Malta, and in the next year Sir Ralph Abercromby landed at Abukir Bay and defeated the French at the Battle of Alexandria.

The position now settled down to war by sea, and a work of great importance was undertaken by the Channel Fleet to which Lord St. Vincent was appointed during April as Commander-in-Chief in succession to Lord Bridport. Just as during the British naval operations of 1914-18 unceasing work went on week after week by many small craft, so it became a most important duty for St. Vincent's frigates and small craft to attack the French coastal convoys upon which the Brest fleet mainly relied for their supplies. Dunkirk was so efficiently blockaded that it laid up its shipping; its stores had to be sent to Brest by the painful land route in wagons. Finally, supplies from southern ports were so successfully prevented from reaching Brest that the latter became no longer a base for important operations. But Britain's endeavor to stop all trade with France brought about

another dangerous crisis. The former insisted on the right of search and detention of neutral ships, and thus roused the ill will of northern countries. In August, 1800, the Emperor Paul of Russia invited the Kings of Prussia, Denmark and Sweden to concert measures for reestablishing an armed neutrality. He dismissed the British Ambassador, and it looked as if France was soon to be joined by this powerful confederacy. Once again the harvest had been bad, prices in England rose, clamorous disturbances protested against the never-ending French war, and Pitt's burdens appeared to be unceasing.

The Volunteers were able to prevent much mischief being done by the rioters. Parliament reassembled in November, and the Habeas Corpus Act once more had to be suspended. During the next month the Northern Armed Neutrality had been consolidated by a treaty. Thus, when on January 22, 1801, the first Imperial Parliament met at Westminster, the King's speech complained bitterly of the aggressive hostile confederacy and submitted provisions; for an increased Navy fifteen million, eight hundred thousand pounds instead of thirteen million, six hundred thousand pounds; and nine million, six hundred and seventeen thousand pounds for the Army (instead of eight million, eight hundred and fifty thousand pounds). But Sir Hyde Parker and Nelson were sent north in the early spring, the Danish fleet was engaged off Copenhagen on April second, most of it was destroyed or captured, and this victory caused the armed neutrality to dissolve. By that date, however, Pitt was no longer guiding his country's destinies.

Chapter XVII

DROPPING THE PILOT

We now come to that drama which had been left in suspense after the union of Great Britain with Ireland had been accomplished. For, scarcely had the first Imperial Parliament come together than Pitt was inevitably to make a great decision. We have seen that a provision for the relief of Roman Catholic disabilities had been left unsettled. The time had now come when pressure was being brought to have this remedied. Cornwallis, Castlereagh and Pitt himself, all considered that this was only equitable and part of their bargain with Ireland.

The atmosphere in Court and official circles at this time was heavily charged with prejudice, so that the bare justice and cold logic of Pitt's attitude was not capable of being appreciated. Events followed one another with a rapidity which was in proportion to the vehement feeling that prevailed. While this matter was under discussion by the Cabinet, the Premier confined the subject to himself. But the tidings of Pitt's plan for emancipation reached the King's ears, who on January 28, 1801, at a levee expressed himself as opposed to the relief of Roman Catholics and dissenters. At the request of George III, Mr. Speaker Addington next day essayed to dissuade Pitt from his intention. Two days later the latter learned that the King had declared he would regard as his enemy any one who should put forward this emancipation plan. Pitt's old friend Tomline was also strongly opposed to the principle of relief.

Possibly neither of these two admirers quite realized how firmly the Premier had made up his mind; how committed he considered himself to the measure. To-day was one of the supreme crises in the life of Pitt which

had been one climax after another, year in, year out. One might feel some surprise that a statesman of his caliber and experience, who had steered the State through so many storms, should think of leaving the helm in the midst of a great war. Many a politician would have thought this fiery religious question not of the same immediate importance as insuring victory over France. But Pitt was accustomed to have his own way, to inspire trust and to expect confidence from his sovereign. Now that the King had so plainly and resolutely shown that he would over-ride his Premier on a pet point, Pitt was conscious of his pride having been pierced. It was in part petulance which actuated the Minister, but it was something more. For one who had sacrificed his health and strength in the King's service, for one whose hair had gone prematurely white during unprecedented mental strain, the behavior of His Majesty was tantamount to an expression of having lost confidence. That was something which Pitt, with all his fine qualities, could not tolerate; it was, at least, hardly encouraging after having with great difficulty brought about some sort of understanding with Ireland.

So, on that memorable last day in January behold Pitt with his quill pen seated at his Downing Street desk writing a letter so long that it occupies twelve and a half large-sized pages of note-paper. He was not a great literary expressionist, but this document is proof of a big soul on a tremendous occasion pouring forth through the medium of ink and paper with such restraint, such dignity and remarkable nobility, that we can not fail to agree with Stanhope's verdict: "I know of no models more perfect for State Papers than this letter."* As we examine the scholarly handwriting, we can see the nervous

* *Life of Pitt*, I, p. 244.

tension through which Pitt was passing; but most of all there emerges a singularly clear, manly, sensible, determined, yet respectful presentation of the position.

Written, of course, in the third person, Pitt addresses the King "respecting the Catholics and Dissenters," who "must naturally be agitated in consequence of the Union." The Premier concurs in "the prevailing sentiment of the Majority of the Cabinet that the Admission of the Catholics and Dissenters to offices, and of the Catholics to Parliament [from which latter the dissenters are not now excluded] would, under certain conditions to be specified, be highly advisable, with a view to the Tranquillity and Improvement of Ireland, and to the general Interest of the United Kingdom. For himself, He is on full consideration, convinced that the Measure would be attended with no Danger to the Established Church, or to the Protestant Interest in Great Britain or Ireland. . . . That those Principles formerly held by the Catholics which jointly made them considered as politically Dangerous, have been for a course of Time gradually declining, and among the higher Orders particularly, have ceased to prevail."

The Premier then adds that "this opinion is unalterably fixed in his mind." And if the King should not fully concur with Pitt's standpoint, then "It must be personally Mr. Pitt's first wish to be released from a situation which He is conscious that, under such circumstances, he could not continue to fill, but with the greatest disadvantage."*

No time was wasted, for on the following day (February first) the King replied to Pitt, expressing his cordial affection, but considered that having taken the Coronation Oath, he could not consent to this measure. This letter reached Pitt on February second, but on the

* "Chatham Papers," P. R. O.

same day that George III sent that note, Pitt also despatched one to Lord Grenville to the effect that it is "our duty to resign." "The fact and the cause are in truth both sufficiently known. . . . I have found it necessary, in order to prevent a mischievous impression from indistinct or exaggerated rumors, to state it to-day to the Governor of the Bank in a way which he may report on the Stock Exchange to-morrow. I believe by this step much speculation and some alarm will be prevented."*

Pitt now consulted some of his colleagues, and during the afternoon of February third wrote a four-page letter to His Majesty saying that "with additional pain" he now wishes "to be released as soon as possible from his present situation."† This letter was not sent off immediately, for the Prime Minister dined‡ at Downing Street alone, and then at seven-thirty P.M. arrived Addington, who remained with him for three hours. But at ten-thirty P.M., in the latter's presence Pitt gave his private secretary this letter to be copied, and had it despatched late that night to reach the King next morning. The Cabinet did not know of this, but how was it that Addington was allowed to share the secret?

The explanation is that for some time this son of the Pitt family doctor had been considered both by the Premier and the King as likely to succeed Pitt should a change in affairs be made before long. On January thirtieth George III had sent for Addington, and it is generally supposed that the monarch then more definitely indicated this possibility. During the three hours at Downing Street we do not exactly know what was said: but it is permissible to imagine the trend of conversation,

* "Dropmore MSS."

† "Chatham Papers," P. R. O.

‡ His dinner hour, Parliament permitting, was usually five P.M.

seeing that Addington was not averse from the honor of undertaking Pitt's office, while the latter was anxious to do what was best for the country, as well as satisfying his own conscience. While primarily the cause of this resignation was the realization that the union was an imperfect and incomplete scheme without emancipation and merely had merged one Parliament into another without fulfilment of further obligations, yet there were collateral reasons which did not escape Pitt's attention.

For he so genuinely longed for international peace that he was willing to quit office, if the person of another Minister would make it more practicable for France to negotiate; and, with the knowledge that Addington would in all probability succeed him, Pitt felt the country would be in sound hands to continue the same policy. There would be no risk of the Fox party, with their pacifist or Jacobinical ideas, obtaining control. But, also, Pitt was mentally weary and physically declining. He was now approaching his forty-second birthday, but he had just passed through seventeen years of incessant political toil, of which the last eight had been unprecedented in the history of politics. He was internally an old man, whose strength had been almost consumed. No longer had his temperament that elastic flexibility; like his veins, it had hardened, and he was disinclined to yield even to his sovereign on what both regarded as a major matter.

The clear-cut, stubborn, narrow reasoning of George III is perfectly understandable and thoroughly honorable, yet it was based on a false impression that his oath would be violated. Pitt's sense of loyalty was rivaled only by his integrity: he had been led into a dilemma through difficult circumstances. Resignation was the only alternative to defiance of the King. But that which surprised the country was the appointment of Addington, who had never shone

as a debater nor exhibited such talents as distinguish one suited to lead the House. As for Pitt, he was far too high-souled to feel any petty jealousy; his whole conduct now was to keep in their respective offices so many of his former colleagues as were willing to remain. In this way his own brother, Lord Chatham, was prevailed on to continue as President of the Council, but men like Lord Spencer, Mr. Windham, and some others withdrew. The Duke of Portland, Lord Westmoreland, as well as Lord Hawkesbury (afterwards Earl of Liverpool), who had been against Roman Catholic emancipation, carried on.

George III, sane or mad, obstinate toward any change or merely a personage particularly disposed to permanent conservatism, knew a gentleman when he saw one. His regard for Pitt was that for a man of honor and incorruptible nobility. At a levee on February eleventh this year the two met. "Mr. Pitt," greeted His Majesty. "I am glad to see you; you have acted like yourself throughout this business. Nothing could possibly be more honorable." So they parted as friends, who had during so many crises taken counsel together. "Farmer" George, with his irritating mannerism of repeating "What? What?" at the end of his sentences was not insensible to this severance of association. Both King and country owed a huge indebtedness to the pilot now coming ashore, and the former well showed that, with this royal respect was mingled also affection.

But the change over could not be done instantly. It would have been politically discourteous to have left Addington to provide a budget all of a sudden, so on February eighteenth Pitt introduced this to the House. It was not too easy a problem owing to the disappointing harvests. "The scarcity of food," he remarked, "has been severely felt, and there has consequently been a

defalcation in the public receipts." The smugglers had again been hard at work in the English Channel. "We have increased our external and internal commerce to a greater pitch than ever it was before; and we may look to the present as the proudest year that has ever yet occurred for this country." For no less than twenty-four million pounds' worth of British manufactures had been exported within twelve months. Still, on the other side, came the need for the sinews of war. He required loans of twenty-eight million, thirty-nine thousand pounds, together with taxes on tea, paper, printed goods, sugar, timber, pepper, lead, train-oil, raisins, stamps and horses. Such was the confidence of the House that this budget went through without any opposition.

Even with this final task off his hands it was not possible for Pitt to depart. The King had been so affected by all this worry of emancipation, of losing Pitt, of the long-drawn-out war, of the distress in the country, that his mind became deranged, as madness had overtaken him in 1788. Dr. Thomas Willis again took charge of the patient, but all regal business had to be delayed. On March twelfth Pitt addressed the Commons on the subject of Ireland and took advantage of the opportunity to point out there was indeed some difference between parliamentary reform and Jacobinical principles. During the next few days the King had so far recovered that Pitt was able formally to resign the offices of First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer which he had held for so many years, but now were to be taken up by Addington. Besides those of Pitt's supporters already mentioned as retiring, must be mentioned Lord Grenville, Lord Cornwallis and Canning. Lord Hawkesbury became the Foreign Secretary, and Lord St. Vincent became First Lord of the Admiralty.

JOHN JERVIS, EARL ST. VINCENT

Commander-in-Chief at the Battle of St. Vincent, 1797, and of the Channel Fleet, 1800. First Lord of the Admiralty, 1801, and severely criticized by Pitt.

Pitt did not retire from Parliament altogether, but still represented his Cambridge constituency. He was able to look back on some considerable naval successes to counterbalance the military failures and the heavy expenditure. Apart from the four great sea victories under Howe, Duncan, St. Vincent and Nelson, there had been added to British possessions the following remarkable list: Martinique, Trinidad, St. Lucia, Curaçoa, Demerara, Essequibo, Berbice, Cape of Good Hope, Surinam, all the Dutch East India settlements, Minorca and Malta. Besides obtaining command of the sea, the British Navy had during the last eight years destroyed or taken seventy-eight line-of-battle ships, one hundred and eighty-one frigates, two hundred and twenty-four smaller craft and the eight hundred and thirty-four privateers previously mentioned; making a total of one thousand three hundred and seventeen vessels. He had increased the size of the Navy from one hundred and thirty-five line-of-battle ships and one hundred and thirty-three frigates in 1793 to two hundred and two line-of-battle ships and two hundred and seventy-seven frigates in 1801. Meanwhile the French Navy had been reduced. As to the British Army, he had seen this grow from nine thousand to one hundred and sixteen thousand (including the Militia), to say nothing of one hundred and twenty-eight thousand Volunteers, who would have been employed to repel an invasion, but meanwhile were usefully employed in preventing rioting.

Nor did all that save him from ill-founded criticism, from foolish tittle-tattle, from absurd rumors. Thus this March, 1801, he gained great unpopularity in some quarters for having deserted the King. Peregrine Kenyon writes to Mrs. Kenyon to say that the opposition "are rejoicing in the King's recovery, for they have found out

that the Prince of Wales was determined to keep Mr. Pitt in as Prime Minister, as so good a friend to the Roman Catholics."* Others were spreading the lie that Pitt had given up office because he could not face the present political difficulties. That was a particularly unfortunate remark seeing that Pitt was the last person to be wanting in courage for shouldering responsibilities. On March twenty-fifth, he addressed the House as a private member and lent his support toward the attainment of victory over France. "I hope," he remarked, "the spirit of the country will not be impaired, nor in any degree slackened, but exerted with vigor towards bringing it to a termination."

Then, with regard to having quitted office he added: "I do not see any mystery about that subject, and I think I am entitled to rely on the candor of gentlemen on the other side for believing the sincerity of our declaration on the occasion. . . . I have lived to very little purpose for the last seventeen years of my life, if it is necessary for me to say, that I have not quitted my situation in order to shrink from its difficulties." And Pitt was right: but that last sentence scarcely disguised a heaviness of soul, a sense of solitary sadness that was now gradually dropping over him.

Even the partially recovered King George III was not refraining from remarks that contained venom. One can only accept them as coming from a person still so weak-minded that three years later came another derangement, and in 1811 he became permanently mad. There exists, however, a curious document headed "Memorandums of the Prince of Wales communicated to me" [*i.e.*, Lord Carlisle], dated April 15, 1801, which makes the following record: "That after an interval of nearly

* "Kenyon MSS."

a month he was admitted to the sight of the King, his father, who received him with every mark of love and fondness." For on this day were dismissed "Dr. Willis' keepers," who had been tending the King. " . . . He turned quick to the most violent accusation of Mr. Pitt; detailed methodically a variety of instances of his insolent conduct towards him; warned the P[rince] against his ambition, and concluded with saying, of a bad set, Lord Grenville was the honestest."*

Long after Lord Stanhope wrote his four-volume biography of Pitt there came to hand a series of interesting correspondence, which throws light on the latter's activities during the next five years. And among this collection is one letter which shows that Pitt had already begun to feel the benefit to his health after having laid aside the cares of State. On April 19, 1801, Lady Hester Stanhope writes to a Mr. F. R. Jackson concerning the ex-Premier: "He appears to be so happy and well; for he says what with the luxury of living with his friends, and the improvement of affairs, his only apprehension will be of growing too fat for horseman's weight, at least as a companion in my rides."†

But Pitt was clever at disguising from relatives and friends the true state of his anxious thoughts, and he was passing through a highly worrying period. His sole income, as a private individual, now amounted to little more than double the emolument which was attached to the Walmer Lord Wardenship. As against this, he was now forty-five thousand pounds in debt through having neglected attention to his private affairs while serving his country whole heartedly. His expenditure having

* "Carlisle MSS."

† *Notes and Extracts of Letters Referring to Mr. Pitt and Walmer Castle 1801-1806.* Printed for Private Circulation, 1866.

far exceeded his income, and that portion of his revenue which was derived as First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer having now been relinquished, his creditors were not long in clamoring for their money. It was quite obvious that on an income of three thousand pounds plus a pension of four thousand he could not maintain Hollwood and Walmer Castle, and pay off any substantial part of his indebtedness.*

There is something intensely pathetic when we contemplate the hopeless insolvency of this unprotected bachelor who had brought prosperity to the country and afforded her protection from her enemies. It is a situation ill-proportioned and wrongly balanced that genius should be so disfigured. But nothing could better indicate the national esteem in which he was still held than two separate offers. In June, 1801, the King through George Rose graciously offered to pay off all Pitt's debts, but the proud retired Prime Minister impractically declined. The London merchants, who had so extensively profited by Pitt's guidance, again made him an offer of one hundred thousand pounds, with a promise that the names of the contributors should never be disclosed, but this likewise he refused.

Under these circumstances it was difficult enough for his friends to know what to do. Such an independent temperament could scarcely be accommodated. Meanwhile some of the creditors were becoming importunate and instituting legal proceedings. Truly Pitt was to experience almost every kind of mental pain that a man of refinement can ever suffer. His possessions comprised a library of books, furniture, carriage and horses, cloth-

* According to Stanhope, Pitt's servants at Hollwood and Downing Street cost the Premier twenty-three hundred pounds a year. And such was the waste permitted that nine hundredweight of butcher's meat was being charged in his bills each week.

ing and so on; but he also owned a number of pictures set with diamonds, as well as other presents from foreign courts. These gifts, and some boxes with which he had received the freedom of certain cities, he sold for about four thousand pounds. His beloved Hollwood property had to go, and that, after the mortgage had been paid off, gave him four thousand pounds. He sold his reversionary interests; in fact, there was little which belonged to him which he did not dispose of; yet even that did not suffice to make up the deficiency. After a great deal of persuasion he accepted from fourteen of his friends (among whom were Tomline, Camden and Rose) the loan of eleven thousand, seven hundred pounds. He was still considerably involved, but principally with regard to the bankers, Coutts & Co., and frequently had to borrow from his friends.

Here was a man without vices or an expensive wife, so disinterested that, in spite of all this, when he died five years later he still owed forty thousand pounds. As to his integrity and freedom from extravagance, even Fox testified. While he was out of office, he spent most of his time down at Walmer Castle, where he kept up only a small establishment of servants. But it was necessary to have a London residence of some kind, while attending Parliament, so he took a house first in Park Place, St. James's, and afterwards at 14 York Place, Portman Square. He had to give up entertaining in town, but some of his more intimate friends used to visit him at Walmer; and such was the man's courage that outwardly even to Bishop Tomline (for whom he had sent in February, 1801) Pitt seemed to bear his worries with equanimity and betray no signs of dejection.

But the physician, Sir Walter Farquhar, saw the patient in a different light. He could not fail to notice

that the statesman who ought to have taken his repose long since was now getting into a poor condition, with restless and troubled nights, vomiting every morning, shrinking from all nourishment, so that the sight of dinner brought on a fit of retching. During the preceding months Farquhar had been very worried about him. "All that I could do under such circumstances was to direct my attention to the stomach & bowels, & to strengthen & aid them by gentle bitters & mild medicines." But after the retirement from office, even though Pitt made a spare breakfast and tried dieting, he was not improving. Farquhar therefore sent him down to Walmer in the hope that the sea air might succeed; and for a time this undoubtedly achieved some good. All the while, however, his mind was concerned not with his own health but with the safety and welfare of the nation. If he was physically no longer a Minister, he was in spirit still toiling with the Cabinet. The war and its progress could not be forgotten for an hour.

The battle of Copenhagen and the assassination of Emperor Paul of Russia—both in March, 1801—had spoiled all hope of Napoleon being able to rely on neutrals for the humiliation of England through invasion that year. There was a more general yearning now for peace, on both sides of the Channel. Enthusiasms for hostilities had become stale, for while Bonaparte was still supreme on the Continent he could do nothing at sea. In his case it would be advantageous to have time in which to restore French finances and await a more favorable opportunity for effecting his ambitious aggrandizement. In England, also, there was a strong Peace party, for the steam-engine had increased the manufacturing capacity of the population who would profit not a little by the admission of goods into France.

This national feeling did not escape Pitt, who on October 5, 1801, wrote* to Lord Grenville in the following terms:

"I agree with you in thinking that the permanence of peace under the present circumstances (though there are many chances for it) ought to be considered as very precarious; and that we ought therefore to be constantly prepared for the possible renewal of the contest. But I cannot, and I think you would not, push this consideration so far as to make it a reason against any treaty with the French Government."† This letter was written under the influence of an important event which had just taken place; there were indications that at last the fighting with France was ended. On October first Pitt wrote two important letters from Park Place, which are proof enough that he was still very much connected with the inner governing of the country. The first was addressed to his friend Mr. Long, and read:

Dear Long,

I have but one moment to tell you that the Die is at length cast and the Preliminaries are just signed.

The signature will not be announced to the Public till tomorrow morning.

The terms, tho' not in every Point precisely all that one could wish, are certainly highly creditable, and on the whole very advantageous.

I do not expect all our Friends to be compleatly satisfied, but the Country at large will I think be very much so; and I consider the Event as fortunate both for the Government and for the Public. I hope now in a very few days to come to you.

Ever sincerely yours
W. Pitt.

* "Dropmore MSS."

† "Spencer Papers," IV, p. 304.

To Lord Spencer Pitt wrote:

My dear Lord,

Lest the intelligence should not reach you so soon from any other quarter, I cannot omit to inform you that our long suspense is at an end, and the Preliminaries are just now actually signed. We are to retain Ceylon and Trinidad, the Cape is restored (as a free port), and all the other possessions of France and her allies. Malta is to be given back to the Order, and to be independent both of Great Britain and France, and under the protection of some third power to be agreed upon, which I hope will be Russia. Egypt is to be restored to the Porte, whose dominions as well as those of Naples and Portugal (with the exception of some trifling change of limits on the Spanish frontier and that of Brazil) are to be guaranteed in the state in which they stood before the war. I shall be anxious to know what you think of these conditions. On the whole I see nothing very materially to regret but the loss of the Cape; and even important as that is, I think the terms may be considered as on the whole highly creditable, and with respect to the East and West Indies, very advantageous. The protection given to helpless allies places the character of the country on high ground, and makes our concessions, though great, appear a sacrifice to good faith and generosity, rather than the effect of timidity and weakness. At least this is the view I am inclined to take of the subject, and it will be a great satisfaction to me indeed if I find it coincides with yours.

Believe me, my dear Lord,

Ever sincerely and faithfully yours,

W. Pitt.

The signature has only just taken place and will not be publicly known till to-morrow.*

If, therefore, Pitt did not as Premier complete the pilotage of his country through to the end of hostilities,

* "Chatham Papers," P. R. O.

the interval was very short, and on March 25, 1802, came the Peace of Amiens. When the Commons considered the preliminary articles on November 3, 1801, Pitt spoke on behalf of this peace with France, though he differed from Grenville and others "with whom it has been my happiness to have been connected by the strictest ties of friendship, for the greater part of my life." Pitt's emphasis was that peace was now "a question of terms only."

While Pitt was not frequently seen in Parliament during 1802, he remained in close touch with Addington whom he assisted with the budget. This was opened on April fifth and appeared so soon after war that twenty-five million pounds were required by way of loan, though the income tax was about to be repealed. Mr. Samuel Whitbread took the opportunity to congratulate the House that the day was at last come when "the solid system of finance," which had so often formed the subject of exultation to Mr. Pitt, but had been found by the country so oppressive, was to be abolished. Mr. Whitbread contended that this repeal would be considered in no other light than of a severe sarcasm on Pitt's conduct. This brought Pitt to his feet and a reply to his tongue, defending his policy through a nine-year war that, while "unexampled in its nature and extent," yet did not prevent the country from making a loan of twenty-five millions at the same price as had been possible in 1793, a year which came immediately after a decade of prosperous peace.

Attacks came likewise from other sources, for it is not easy, amid post-war conditions, to find much enthusiasm for the creator of heavy debts that would take years to be wiped off. While Pitt had done his best for economies, for preventing graft in the purchase of military stores and for eliminating dishonest use of the public

funds, by 1801 he had added the huge sum of two hundred and eighty-seven millions sterling to the national debt in less than ten years. His wisdom and financial foresight, however, remain unchallenged if we note that his war taxes produced more than they had been estimated to afford; that the combined exports and imports of the country had risen in those nine war years from forty-four millions sterling a year to over seventy millions.

But he was now to pay the price of all that was demanded from a heavy physical debt. The taxation of mind and body had now exacted a settlement, so that from September, 1802, the problem was how to repay to nature that which had been borrowed so lavishly. While national and even personal expense could be delayed for a time, Pitt's internal system demanded a return to health right now. His nerves were seriously affected this autumn, his stomach and bowels were in bad condition; in fact, he must either give back to his body that which he had loaned or he would speedily find his vitals bankrupt.

Chapter XVIII

PITT IN RETIREMENT

Having so often faced with equanimity the intricate problems of maintaining his country in sound existence, Pitt could not escape the responsibility of looking to his own sickness. Not even ozone could do everything.

On September 13, 1802, he had begun to heed nature's hints, and from Walmer Castle wrote to Sir Walter Farquhar: "I have been suffering severely from repeated sickness, and the impossibility of retaining almost any food on my stomach, and that the symptoms are such that I do not at all know how to proceed. I am therefore very anxious to see you and receive your directions as early as possible, as I do not feel that things are going at all right."*

Four days later Pitt wrote to Mrs. Stapleton (his mother's companion at Burton Pynsent) that he has "been plagued a good deal for a few days from a Bilious attack, which I believe was brought on partly by a sudden change of Weather, and partly by a little over-exercise in shooting. . . . Hester arrived here yesterday in her way to join her travelling Friends at Dover."† Hester was Pitt's twenty-six year old niece, the eccentric, proud, yet lively daughter of the third Earl Stanhope. Lady Hester, having been unkindly treated by her father; and her grandmother, Lady Chatham, being still alive, this witty young woman had for the last two years spent most of her time at Burton Pynsent. She was now about to pay a visit to the Continent with some friends, and was first spending a brief visit with her uncle.

* *Notes and Extracts.* Vide supra.

† "Chatham Papers," P. R. O.

Farquhar, happening to take a holiday at this time in Ramsgate, had no difficulty in driving over to Walmer, but could not do very much. Pitt even teased the physician that the statesman had baffled the art of medicine, but Sir Walter was doing his best to conceal from outsiders the true state. On September nineteenth Thomas Grenville wrote to Lord Grenville: "Lord Spencer's letters of to-day from Wimbledon mention that Farqhar [sic] had told Lady S[pencer] that Pitt was again quite well,"* and that it was by a mistake Pitt's servant had pursued the doctor to town. George III was certain at this time (confided the Marquis of Buckingham to Lord Grenville) that "Mr. Pitt never would resume his office." He told the same person that the Roman Catholic question was not the real ground of Mr. Pitt's resignation, but "that he could not carry on the war and could not bring his mind to make the peace."

The real truth is that the country was just now feeling terribly the absence of its former Premier. While both Grenville and Canning were discussing how incapable was Addington's Ministry, and demonstrated that Pitt should again take up the reins of office; across the Channel, and only a few miles away from Walmer, the ambitious Bonaparte was gathering around Boulogne one hundred and thirty thousand men to invade England. Not a week had Napoleon paused after Amiens to prepare for a second war. This did not prevent the adventurous Lady Hester Stanhope from taking her trip across to Calais and enjoying a European tour. She was able in this September to report that her "dear uncle" was (as she erroneously imagined) "quite recovered." Womanlike, she added in a letter to a friend that if Pitt "was to be ill, perhaps my having the opportunity

* "Dropmore MSS."

of showing him I have talents as a nurse is better than his having to nurse himself."

In October Pitt visited Bath to take the waters, as his father used to do. The dutiful son also went on to stay with the aged Lady Chatham at Burton Pynsent, whence he wrote on November fifteenth to Lord Grenville: "I scarcely know anything of what has been passing since I came here, except from the newspapers. . . . As to myself, I am persuaded that any idea of returning to Government being either useful or practicable is out of the question, unless in the event of war having taken place, or at least being evidently inevitable." He remained at Bath till near Christmas, and then went back to Walmer till Parliament should reassemble. In January, 1803, he was in touch with Addington, and it was being suggested that Pitt should form a coalition. On February third Pitt wrote from Walmer to Lord Grenville, saying that "though certainly much improved in my health," he doubted whether he was equal to the exertions for undertaking new duties. Six days later, in a letter to Farquhar, he complained that the gout in one foot was causing him "to require rather a larger shoe than common." Thus the tragedy of his father was repeating itself in accord with the hereditary family tradition.

Still at Walmer, Pitt wrote to his brother, Lord Chatham, on February twenty-fourth that, "I find so much benefit during this fine weather from Air and exercise here, that I wish to prolong my stay as much as I can; the more so (to say the truth) as I could hardly be in Town without attending the House; and I do not see in the present state of things any public advantage that could arrive from the statement of my opinions." It was evident to Pitt and others that the country was about to be plunged into another long war, and this apprecia-

tion could not fail to arrest any improvement which Bath and Walmer had done for Pitt's health; there could be no more repose, no retreat, and certainly no contemplated retirement from political life now—however much Farquhar advised it.

On February twenty-eighth we find Pitt again sending a note to Chatham, referring to Bonaparte's "insolence" and desire to regain possession of Egypt. "I certainly can hardly avoid concluding that immediate and certain War would be a less evil than such disgraceful and dangerous concession." But in this fourteen page letter, where the ailing and anxious veteran seems to pour out his complete political opinion, he warns his noble brother of one grave item. "The greatest object of my anxiety is our Finance, on which every thing must so much depend." It was an alarming thought that once more British homes should again be taxed to find unlimited millions; yet, as it turned out, another ten years of hostilities were soon to begin.

"We ought to be prepared for the possibility both of an immediate Rupture," he wrote to his brother on March second, "and for his [Bonaparte's] following it up or rather accompanying it by attempting to strike in the first instance some sudden blow on any vulnerable Point." A fortnight later he informed Lord Grenville that he viewed the present situation with "infinite anxiety . . . and I feel this impression the more deeply because I see no part that I can take, at least in the present moment, which could contribute to diminish its difficulties and dangers."

The position was a little curious. Addington was supposed to be the Prime Minister, yet it was Pitt who had steered the State into peace harbor. Addington's personality was not sufficiently robust, nor his mentality

BATH

As it appeared when Pitt used to take the waters.

WALMER CASTLE

With shipping waiting in the Downs.

vigorous enough to wrestle with the troubles; yet the enfeebled Pitt was straining his nerve to do more than his duty as a private member, and was by his mighty criticism causing Addington no small inconvenience. Pitt was rather in the position of the retired professional seaman, who is irritated at the way some indifferent amateur is sailing the ship, and can not refrain from showing his disapproval of the inexperienced. The question was just this: how long could the expert remain a spectator without taking charge again?

In March, 1803, Addington was at Walmer consulting the pilot, whose energy was superior to his health. Pitt wrote that he did not want to go to Bath "unless Farquhar really lays great stress on it." He was far too interested in the present political suspense. That was on March twenty-fifth. But on April third there came a sudden break with the past, for, bowed down with eighty-two years, there passed away at Burton Pynsent that fine old Lady Chatham, whose unique privilege it had been to be the husband of one William Pitt, and to have brought the other into the world. Always interested in politics, she had been permitted that rare opportunity of watching her son rise to fame, preserve the country through peril, and add a new luster to the family name. Few mothers in human history can ever have gone to the grave more full of pride in their men-folk; yet no woman could have more thoroughly effaced herself to make her men great.

A week later Pitt met Addington at the house of Charles Long, but the situation was not quite simple. Pitt's position was—to continue the simile—that of a master mariner who was quite willing to accept command of the vessel, but he must be allowed to choose his own crew and run the ship according to his own ideas.

In other words, he made it clear to Addington that, should the King desire Pitt to govern the country now that war was approaching, the order must be obeyed. But he would submit his own list of colleagues, and he would take complete charge as Premier. He even suggested that Addington should forsake the Commons by accepting a peerage. Addington was disinclined: nor would he approve of Grenville and Windham. So, while France and Great Britain were rushing headlong toward the clash of war, Pitt and Addington forgot they had once been playmates together, but now began exchanging harsh letters and jeopardizing the friendship of a lifetime. The two following,* expressed with that cold correctness and frigid respect which made the period of Hayes, of bird's-nesting and boyhood rambles seem so distant, adequately indicate Pitt's attitude of insistent independence.

My dear Sir,

I shall certainly be at your orders at the time you mention tomorrow, if you continue anxious to see me, but I can have nothing to add to the explicit statements I have already made to you of my general Ideas, and as you already know the *only Grounds* on which I can entertain any further discussion on the subject . . . I trust you will not think it necessary to give yourself any further trouble upon it unless after consulting your colleagues you find it adviseable on those grounds to recommend that step being taken from the highest Quarter which I have felt it my duty to represent as an indispensable Preliminary to my entering on the formation of any Plan of arrangement. As my opinion on this Point cannot admit of alteration, it would be fruitless to resume our discussion if you entertain on your Part any idea of its proceeding on any other Basis.

I am, My dear Sir,
Sincerely yours
W. PITT.

Rt. Honble H. Addington.

* "Chatham Papers," P. R. O.

This letter in the original draft is full of Pitt's emendations and deletions. While he was not (as we have already seen) the ready writer, though the most fluent of speakers, yet at this time the nervous condition of his health is apparent. Eight days later the tone is still more icy, so that one almost forgets how closely confidential had their respective fathers once been in political matters. The Pitt hauteur, the old dignity, the conscious superiority, are still there in this second generation; but that same gouty irritability, with which Doctor Addington had to contend in Chatham, is now annoying Premier Addington through the Lord Warden.

High Wycombe
April 21st. 1803

My dear Sir,

. . . I certainly never had any Idea of forming an accession to strengthen the present Government, but expected (as I have repeatedly explained) to be called upon to form for H[is] M[ajesty's] consideration, a new plan of Arrangement, in which I undoubtedly wished it to be understood that a very large proportion of his present servants would be included. . . .

Your faithful & obedient servant
W. Pitt.

R^t. Hon^ble. H. Addington.

Between the two men there was no comparison, and it was unfortunate that, at a moment when strength was required to meet Napoleonic aggressiveness, Addington's weak Ministry was in control of the country. George Canning, that clever wit and satirist, who was wrapped up in Pitt's principles and had served with him as Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs and in other offices, was now in his thirty-third year. With the brilliant originality not unconnected with youth, he was responsible for

several lines that seem likely to be remembered as long as Pitt's name is not forgotten. "The Pilot that weather'd the storm," which has been so oft quoted in these chapters, was one of the most apposite of his phrases. But even more cogent was the manner in which he contrasted the past with the present Premier as the metropolis to the suburb:

> Pitt is to Addington
> As London to Paddington.

By the end of April Pitt was back at Walmer, but on May sixteenth war was declared, and four days later he returned to York Place. On May twenty-third the House of Commons considered the King's speech, which informed them "that the conduct of the French Government has obliged his Majesty to recall his Ambassador from Paris and that the Ambassador from the French Republic has left London." For the "restless spirit of ambition" and domination by which the Government of France had been led to advance pretensions, "the most extravagant and injurious," demanded satisfaction and redress. Pitt on this occasion, though no longer the physically able man of former days, spoke in favor of war with such fervor and eloquence that this remains one of his very greatest speeches. Even Fox had to admit that Demosthenes himself, had he been present, must have admired it. On June third and on July twenty-second Pitt again addressed the House, but on the following day he was thinking of his Walmer Castle, and wrote asking Lord Grenville to come and stay there. "Perhaps you will be tempted to come and look at the French cliffs in the course of the summer," he invited.

Presently, Lady Hester Stanhope, having returned

from her continental holiday, and being without a home now that Lady Chatham was gone, came to live with her uncle and act as the hostess at Walmer. That Pitt was not economizing very straitly, is clear from one of her letters written in October. "There are generally three or four men staying in the house," she says; "we dine nine or ten almost every day." The sojourn in London had not improved Pitt's health; he was now very thin, but his spirits were excellent. Moreover he was appearing in quite a new rôle. The negotiations between himself and Addington had collapsed, but the threat of invasion had imposed on him the duties appertaining to a loyal citizen. After the Peace of Amiens, Britain had reduced her army to almost nothing. She was now able to place only forty thousand regular soldiers in the field to repel any French landing, but within a few months she had raised forces consisting of seventy-five thousand regular infantry, twelve thousand regular cavalry, eighty thousand militia, but also three hundred and forty-three thousand yeomanry and volunteers.

So the former Prime Minister now becomes Colonel Pitt in command of the Cinque Port Volunteers, working hard and using up all the energy left to him. "Mr. Pitt absolutely goes through the fatigue of a drill-sergeant," his niece wrote. "It is parade after parade, at fifteen or twenty miles distant from each other." It was this activity which caused Peter Pindar to compose the following lines:

> Come the Consul whenever he will,
> And he means it when Neptune is calmer,
> Pitt will send a d—d bitter pill
> From his fortress the castle of Walmer.

According to Thomas Grenville* there were this

* "Dropmore MSS."

November about ten thousand regulars and militia in Sussex, but a total of thirty-two thousand, one hundred regulars, militia, cavalry and artillery in Sussex and Kent. While Government, country and commerce were all in a state of suspense and expectant of Bonaparte's attack, Pitt had (as he wrote from Walmer on Christmas Day, 1803) been warned to expect "some early attempt from the enemy. Just at present the weather puts it wholly out of the question, but the suspense from day to day will probably keep me here till the meeting of Parliament." While essentially it was the Navy's task to prevent any Napoleonic armada from ever getting across the Channel, it is curious to note that the senior service at this date was not held in quite the repute one would have expected, seeing that the four great sea victories during Pitt's régime had been immensely popular.

The comments of a woman are not always well-informed, yet we can not pass by a curious remark which Lady Esther Stanhope lets drop in connection with her brother James, who was serving afloat and had taken a deep aversion for that part of his Majesty's forces. "I am at this moment," she wrote on January 14, 1804, "alone here with my little brother James, who has left the Navy for the Army; he is too clever for a sailor, too refined, I mean. . . . He is now in the Guards." But this sprightly, attractive young lady, who certainly illumined the last months of Pitt's life, was well known for her not too tactful satire. Uncle and niece had no little admiration for each other, and it was well that there was—all too late—some one to look after his domestic affairs.

That month, she recorded, Walmer was "in almost daily expectation of the arrival of the French, and Mr. Pitt's regiment is now nearly perfect enough to receive

them." He had raised three thousand volunteers, was continually to be seen in uniform riding his horse, and going about the coastline inspecting fortifications. All this open-air life, in spite of the fatigue, was actually doing him good, so that he seemed to be looking better than he had done for seven years. Strategy is much the same in one century as another, and for the reasons given in an earlier chapter, Walmer was just as likely to see the arrival of Napoleon's shallow transports from Boulogne, as the same Kentish beach in B. C. 55 had witnessed Cæsar's craft landing after having set out from Gesoriacum, better known to us as Boulogne. And had the trend of history in the early nineteenth century been but slightly modified, we might have had the unusually interesting occasion of Colonel William Pitt taking Napoleon Bonaparte prisoner, or of the great Consul sending the ex-Premier hurriedly back to Boulogne in one of the empty transports. In any case the meeting face to face of the two most powerful men in all Europe, after all these years of rivalry, would have afforded one of the most picturesque incidents of Britain's island story.

Stationed at Walmer were also the Fifteenth Light Dragoons, the Northampton and Berkshire Militia, and there was a general air of expectancy. Pitt had made every preparation for emergencies, and even Lady Esther had been given her orders how to act in case real alarm should occur while the Colonel himself was away. Meanwhile all this excitement had caused George III again to become insane, and this created another sensation in the country. "He rode three hours on Saturday evening, and had a restless night. He recovered a little on Sunday, *having slept in chapel,* but was hurried in coming back. . . . At dinner he was very unquiet and could not be kept to his seat . . . and latterly grew so angry and

violent," wrote the Marquis of Buckingham on February 14, 1804.*

As each day went by, the possibility of invasion seemed more and more imminent. Pitt laid aside his military duties for a while and came up to town. On the motion for the second reading of the Volunteer Regulation Bill, Pitt found a chance for telling the Government their defensive measures were inadequate. "We are in expectation of an immediate attack from the enemy," he gravely informed the Commons. "When we are threatened by an attempt on our liberty and existence, dictated by slavish power and inordinate ambition, it behoves us to consult our immediate security and not allow of even the idea of disbanding so large a body as four hundred thousand men."

That was on February twenty-seventh. Addington's Government was incompetent to deal with the national crisis. Napoleon had indeed thrust aside the principles of Revolution, but he was wild with the lust of conquest, determined to establish French predominance; and it grieved Pitt to see only a weak Ministry opposing him. At the head of the Admiralty was that veteran sea-dog, Lord St. Vincent; but gallant as the Admiral had been afloat, and splendid as a naval disciplinarian in time of battle or mutiny alike, he was not a success as administrator. He had busied himself with petty economies and dockyard reforms, when he should have been concentrating on maximum war efficiency. He was now aged sixty-nine, and too old for the job. But, notwithstanding the fact that he occupied a high popular estimation, he did not appear to Pitt above blame. It was on March fifteenth that Pitt made the severest criticisms of the Admiralty's insufficient supply of small craft, which were

* "Dropmore MSS."

so essential for operating in shoal water for resisting an invasion. Ever since August, 1803, he informed the Commons, the enemy had been collecting at Boulogne and elsewhere transports for their troops. As to capital ships, the British Navy was likewise weak: it had not been augmented to its proper extent.

And then the indignant Pitt no longer minced matters. "Great as may be my respect for Lord St. Vincent, I cannot be guilty of the hypocrisy to say, this department of the service has been wisely conducted. . . . I am apt to think that between his lordship as a commander on the sea, and his lordship as First Lord of the Admiralty, there is a very wide difference." On two subsequent occasions that month did Pitt address the House on the subject of the country's defense; and when not in Parliament castigating the government to be up and doing, he was down at Walmer reviewing his Volunteers, ignoring the east winds and being rewarded with a bad cough, but giving his niece a golden opportunity to exercise her womanly attention. "Nobody," she commented, "is so like an angel when he is extremely ill, and few persons less tractable when a little ill; always urging it is nothing, and taking no care in the world of himself."

But a parliamentary climax was fast approaching. The present Ministry could not go on. It was April twenty-fifth when Addington's majority fell to merely thirty-seven, and next day came the Premier's resignation. There was only one man to succeed him, and the King (now fairly sane again) ordered Pitt to plan a new government. The latter accepted, and proposed including Fox, as well as Grenville, to form a comprehensive Ministry. These two names His Majesty entirely declined to accept, and demanded that there should be no tampering with the Test Act; but inasmuch as Pitt had

in March, 1801, assured George III that the Roman Catholic question would never again be raised, this last condition did not affect matters. Grenville, being still of the opinion that the union with Ireland was incomplete unless Roman Catholics were speedily conciliated, and being unwilling to accept office without Fox, caused Pitt to be left in the lurch. There vanished also Spencer, Fitzwilliam and Windham. After all these years it was a hard blow for Pitt to lose Grenville's friendship.

Relying, therefore, on a few personal friends, with the inclusion of some who supported Addington, Pitt was able to complete a Ministry that was far from strong. But on May tenth we find Pitt entering upon his second administration as First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer; the Duke of Portland as President of the Council; Dundas (who had, to Pitt's surprise, recently accepted a peerage as Lord Melville) becoming First Lord of the Admiralty instead of St. Vincent; Lord Chatham becoming Master General of the Ordnance; Lord Harrowby as Foreign Minister, with Castlereagh as President of the Board of Control for the Affairs of India. A few weeks later Pitt offered George Tierney the Irish Chief Secretaryship, and thus gave proof that personal enmity was long since sunk in anxiety for the country, but Tierney would not accept.

From the first Pitt was confronted with the difficulty of the King's health, so that on May sixteenth a letter signed by Pitt and Lord Chancellor Eldon was sent to George enclosing a report from the royal physician. His Majesty was implored to comply with the medical advice, not allow himself to be fatigued by protracted audiences or conversation, but to conserve his health. Unfortunately, however, the King's mental condition now became (as the Prince of Wales remarked to the Marquis

of Buckingham) "desperate," so that he had to be put under restraint. As he was very troublesome, Pitt was only too glad to get the King removed presently to Weymouth. There, also, the invalid became a nuisance to all concerned, who managed to get him to one of the naval craft from the shore. He would then remain on board, out of view of the inquisitive crowd, from ten A. M. till six P. M; but the King insisted on salutes being fired and returned by the frigates, yachts and batteries every time he embarked and disembarked, so it was impossible to obtain privacy.

Chapter XIX

PITT PASSES

It was well that Addington's Ministry had been dissolved, for the national peril demanded that all the best abilities should be united to one common end; and every party agreed that Pitt was the man to be at the head.

The three parties opposing him were led respectively by Fox, Addington and Windham. On June fifth he submitted a plan for maintaining a permanent additional force for the defense of the realm, and carried it through successfully. At the end of the session he was back at Walmer, but his health demanded that when in town he must have country air. It was for this reason that he again selected Putney Heath, and leased Bowling Green House. This he took furnished, and amid the tense times when Napoleonic activities prevented Pitt from being too far from Downing Street, it afforded him a certain amount of retreat. He was away from his well-lined shelves of reference volumes which Walmer's Castle sheltered, but occasionally he would send down for Lady Hester to despatch "a large green bag containing some heavy books." Most experts in one sphere have the idea that in some other department they could make a considerable attainment, and it was still an amusing little pride in this Premier that every house, or cottage, or garden which met his eyes, could be improved by his touch.

In December Napoleon became Emperor, and Spain declared war against Britain. History was repeating itself. It became the policy of Pitt, while largely increasing the fleet, to form a coalition in which Britain, Austria and France were to be the principal members. Two days

before Christmas Pitt had a reconciliation with Addington, and there is a letter dated December twenty-fifth in which the Premier writes to his brother Chatham: "I have . . . had a communication with Addington, which led to our meeting the day before yesterday, and again yesterday . . . we have had no difficulty in coming to a perfectly friendly and cordial understanding." Soon afterwards Henry Addington became Viscount Sidmouth and entered Pitt's Cabinet.

But the Prime Minister was having no easy time, and the uncertainty of developments maintained an unceasing strain. On February 8, 1805, his desire to suspend yet again the Habeas Corpus Act caused the opposition of Windham, who had once been his colleague, but by one hundred and twelve to thirty-three votes the House of Commons gave Pitt their approval, and four days later, when the war with Spain was discussed, they overwhelmingly supported him by three hundred and thirteen to one hundred and six. By April eleventh the Anglo-Russian convention had been signed, and the stage was now slowly being set for the great events to occur. Amid this desperate struggle, represented in the persons of Bonaparte and Pitt, the latter was grappling not merely with the mightiest military mind, but fighting fate.

In Parliament his own character and a sense of patriotism could always on such occasions insure for him confidence up to a point. But his colleagues comprised a meager mediocrity at the best; nothing was certain, and anything might happen from day to day. Meanwhile within his own body a powerful determined will was fighting approaching death. Farquhar was constantly urging on him the necessity of withdrawing from work altogether, but Pitt was always replying that the country

required his services, that he would rather die at his post than desert it.

It therefore became just a matter of months. Increasing illness, decreasing strength and pressure of public business combined to make life barely possible. An extraordinarily active mind was creating impossible demands on a body that was all but worn out. The constant attendance at the House of Commons, the lateness of hours, the irregularity of his time for dining, all aggravated the debility. Farquhar therefore suggested that every day his patient should have a hot luncheon at two P.M., with one or two glasses of what he called "good brisk Ale." At first Pitt objected strongly, especially to the ale; as his old family friend and adviser, Doctor Addington, had been accustomed to forbid this beverage. But eventually Pitt yielded and was able to carry on his duties with some benefit.

"Every public event of importance which crowded on Mr. Pitt's mind from that period until the Autumn of 1805," Farquhar recorded, "produced a corresponding effect upon the body, & I felt it my duty frequently to urge the necessity of his retiring from public business altogether, but Mr. Pitt's memorable reply was, that his Country needed his Services, & he would rather prefer to die at his Post, than desert it." Unfortunately, there came during that spring an incident which dealt Pitt such a blow that it was one of the immediate causes of his final physical breakdown. We have seen that nothing so affected him, nothing so revealed his sensitiveness, as any attack on his honor, or on the integrity of those in whom he reposed trust. Contrariwise, Pitt was so prominent a target, so highly known as a man above dishonesty, that his opponents were thrilled with pleasure when by chance some spot or blemish could be found. If some

FRENCH FLAT-BOTTOM VESSELS

As seen in August, 1803, and intended to carry troops for the invasion of England. They were about one hundred and twenty feet long, with forty feet beam, to transport five hundred men each. They were rigged with mainsail and flying topsail, were rowed by eighteen sweeps a side, were fitted with a drawbridge (shown triced up the forestay), had guns,

ambitious and rising politician could find the least suspicion of irregularity in Pitt's activities, then here was a unique chance of winning notoriety.

The opportunity and accuser came about as follows. Right back in 1785 Henry Dundas, who had become Treasurer of the Navy in the previous year, and was destined to be Pitt's colleague through one long political career, had got a bill passed to prevent the Treasurer of the Navy appropriating any money passing through his official hands. In those peculant days, when so many men in high position robbed the State right and left, this new Act was a Pitt-inspired move toward political purification. In 1802 came a further Act appointing five commissioners to investigate the irregularities alleged to exist in the Naval department, and on February 13, 1805, was issued their report dealing with the Treasurer of the Navy and his methods. Here burst the bombshell. It was found that, during the period of Dundas, large public sums of money had been applied to non-Naval uses.

This provided Mr. Samuel Whitbread, a member of the House of Commons, with a perfect opportunity.

Whitbread was one of those men who positively love to champion causes and expose scandals. Masterful in his manner, vehement in his denunciations, rash in his reformative zeal, persistent of purpose, vulgar in his lack of restraint, he was fundamentally vainglorious. Coming of a Non-conformist family, he had entered a London brewery in the capacity of clerk. But hard work and good fortune combined eventually to make him owner. He had been elected to Parliament in 1790, became a partizan of Fox, a prominent person in the Opposition, and an intense pacifist. At the moment when he enters into our story we see him a self-confident middle-aged man of forty-seven, but ten years later he committed

suicide while mentally deranged—one more of those many sad cases of insanity that marked the eighteenth century.

Whitbread made his long speech on April 8, 1805, and called the Commons' attention to the fact that Dundas, on being required to account for the money which had been drawn from the Bank, had declared a somewhat evasive answer, that he had no particulars by him, and that even if he had them he could not reply without disclosing delicate and confidential Government transactions. It was a little awkward for Dundas (now Lord Melville, since he had been promoted by Addington on Christmas Eve of 1802), thus to be placed. Still more so, inasmuch as at the present moment he was First Lord of the Admiralty amid another great war. But the position for Pitt was scarcely less difficult. He readily agreed that the matter deserved the House's most serious attention, and proposed that a select committee be appointed to investigate the subject.

The Premier was doing his best with an impossible case, once more fencing, shifting about, throwing out *ifs* and trying hard to defend Melville. And then came the voting. It was a dead heat—two hundred sixteen to two hundred sixteen. The Speaker gave his casting vote —but in favor of Whitbread's motion. The effect of this defeat and moral censure was to grieve Pitt so bitterly, that he could not disguise his emotion. His old friend, Wilberforce, had ardently supported Whitbread, and now the last chapter in the life of Chatham's great son had begun. Heavy sadness was to make the weight of war and ill-health supportable for but a short time longer.

Melville, of course, had to resign forthwith, and was succeeded by Sir Charles Middleton, a British admiral who had never flown his flag afloat, but had served several years at the Admiralty as Controller and as one of the

junior Lords. He now became Lord Barham, his naval experience was to be of considerable value, yet he was already in his eightieth year. Meanwhile Whitbread proceeded with his self-appointed task, and on May sixth moved that Melville's name be removed from the Privy Council. But Pitt had already anticipated this, so he got up and replied to Whitbread: "I have felt it my duty to advise the erasure of Lord Melville's name from the list of his Majesty's councillors; his Majesty has acceded to this advice. . . . I certainly felt a deep and bitter pang in being compelled to be the instrument of rendering still more severe the punishment of the noble lord. . . . It is a feeling which nothing but my conviction of the opinion of Parliament, and my sense of public duty could possibly have overcome."

In these brave and bitter words Pitt was speaking from the depths of a breaking heart, but the tragedy was not allowed to end at that. On June twenty-fifth it was agreed that Melville should be impeached, and this was one more blow against an honored colleague. The case did indeed come on next year, though Pitt never lived to see it. The trial lasted fifteen days, the matter was thoroughly sifted, and there was no doubt that Melville had been extremely negligent. But he was acquitted of embezzlement; in 1807 was restored to the Privy Council, though never again took office. When we bear in mind that Melville not merely had been a close political friend for more than sixteen years, but was one of those who gave one thousand pounds when the sum of eleven thousand seven hundred pounds was subscribed to assist Pitt during his financial embarrassment in 1801, we can well appreciate something of the Prime Minister's pain. After this scandal had become the talk of every one in the country, the popular remark made was, "Bad is the best

of 'em, but the only honest man is Mr. Pitt." And now it was to be his turn to receive Whitbread's attention.

On May thirteenth Pitt had spoken concerning the Roman Catholic Irish question and made what was a very frank, candid, speech; but judicial and guarded, rather than enthusiastic. "We are bound to consider, not merely what is desired by a part, but what is best and most advantageous for the whole." He was no longer the determined implacable emancipator. That he was feeling none too well is obvious from a letter written on June seventh by Thomas Grenville to Lord Grenville, where the former says: "Pitt's St. Anthony's fire prevented his going to the House yesterday." The gout and biliousness, the Melville trouble and the impending events were demanding their toll. Medicines and diet could now do little good for him.

On June fourteenth he was in his place when Mr. Whitbread launched another scandal. He raised the matter which went back to September, 1796, when Pitt had advanced the sum of forty thousand pounds to Messrs. Boyd, Benfield & Co., contractors, for two loans then in progress of payment. This firm, on account of the general monetary embarrassment at that critical anxious time, had applied to Pitt and Dundas for assistance; the partners found themselves unable temporarily to make good their instalment. Certainly the position was unusual, but so were the events generally. Were not the very foundations of the British nation being threatened? Pitt, in his wisdom for the public interests, had seen fit therefore to advance this sum to the firm, who by January, 1798, had repaid it. These are the bare facts, and Whitbread with his narrow partizanship sought to score a big point seven years after the affair had been closed.

Thus again wounded at a sensitive place, Pitt rose and

made a long speech in his own "defense and justification," but this time he was merciless in his icy sarcasm for the brewer of hops. He taunted Whitbread on the purity of those who dealt in hops and corn, "and those branches of human industry connected with them." It is amusing that the poverty-stricken Premier, who drank port and hated ale, should have this chance of smiting the Nonconformist brewer for his "opulence." And then, with his customary disdainful analytical manner, Pitt flung this at him: "The object of this resolution is to declare that this loan, on account of its being secret, was a most dangerous precedent. Now, I am quite at a loss to know why a thing is to be a dangerous precedent, because it is a secret; and how it is a bad example, because it is not known." The House understood that Pitt had acted, in the special circumstances, perfectly honorably; but it required a Bill of Indemnity to set the matter in order; so this was now done.

And there were minor worries owing to Addington, with whom friendship again became strained this year; for Sidmouth's family were a little too pushful and ambitious as place-hunters. Then in July, George III had become almost blind, and in September Pitt went down to visit him at Weymouth. This had been Pitt's last parliamentary session, and by August Napoleon's invasion plan had failed: for the requisite command of the sea was not to be French. It is true that from Rochefort a squadron had got away and made for the West Indies, but it was chased by Cochrane. In March the French fleet under Villeneuve escaped from Toulon and made for the West Indies also. It was intended by Napoleon to concentrate these forces at Martinique, whence they were to return across the Atlantic, unite with the Spanish fleet and proceed to the English Channel to cover the trans-

port of Bonaparte's expedition across from Boulogne.

The essential basis of the scheme broke down, for a fleet in Brest could not burst through the British blockade. Villeneuve sailed east across the Atlantic, but off Ferrol the Franco-Spanish fleet (which Nelson had chased from the West Indies) encountered Admiral Calder with some loss, yet managed presently to enter Cadiz. The concentration having failed Napoleon, it became necessary to break up the Boulogne camp. Nelson came home to England for a short time, but long enough for him to realize how much the country loved him. "I met Lord Nelson in August, 1805," wrote Lord Minto, "in a mob in Piccadilly. I got hold of his arm so that I was mobbed too. It is really quite affecting to see the wonder and admiration and love and respect of the whole world." Then on September first, Captain the Honorable H. Blackwood brought to Nelson at Merton news of the allied fleets' arrival at Cadiz, and the two proceeded straight up to town. At the Admiralty Lord Barham willingly accepted his services; Pitt went out of his way to be courteous and saw the Admiral into his carriage. What was the exact conversation between the Premier and the gallant victor of the Nile we shall never know. But there is one expression, written fifteen days before the battle of Trafalgar, which sufficiently indicates the instructions that must have been given.

Writing to George Rose, from aboard the "Victory, 16 leagues West from Cadiz, October 6th, 1805," Nelson used this passage: "It is as Mr. Pitt knows, annihilation that the Country wants, and not merely a splendid Victory of twenty-three to thirty-six,—honourable to the parties concerned, but absolutely useless in the extended scale to bring Buonaparte to his marrow-bones: numbers only can annihilate. I think not for myself, but the

LORD NELSON

Commander-in-Chief at Trafalgar.

Country, therefore I hope the Admiralty will send the first force as soon as possible, and Frigates, and Sloops of War, for I am very destitute. I do not mean this as any complaint, quite the contrary; I believe they are doing all they can, if interest does not interfere; therefore, if Mr. Pitt would hint to Lord Barham, that he shall be anxious until I get the force proposed, and plenty of Frigates and Sloops in order to watch them closely, it may be advantageous to the Country: you are at liberty to mention this to Mr. Pitt, but I should not wish it to go farther."

Annihilation! That was the key-word when Nelson and Pitt bade each other good-by, this September. Napoleon must be brought "to his marrow-bones."

But now came disappointment. On October twentieth the Austrian General capitulated with about thirty thousand men to the French at Ulm. When the news reached Pitt on November second, he was appalled and overcome. On October twenty-first was won the victorious battle of Trafalgar, wherein the Franco-Spanish fleet was annihilated as Pitt had wished. Of course he was delighted. Thomas Grenville, writing to Lord Grenville on November eleventh, remarked, "All that I hear of Pitt is that he is *tout rayonnant de gloire.*" That was perfectly true. At the Lord Mayor's banquet Pitt was acclaimed as the saviour of Europe. But, if he was conditionally happy, he could not forget the terrible Ulm collapse, nor the death of that very gallant little gentleman who had so specifically interpreted the Premier's orders. The Trafalgar news was such that at last Pitt could no longer control himself; that is to say, he was in such a nervous, excited condition that he could not sleep.

Sir Walter Farquhar was anxious. Through October and November Pitt had suffered from increasing pains in

the head and stomach, loss of appetite, with the addition of "flying pains" at the feet and limbs. The physician therefore recommended him to visit Bath, and take the waters which had previously done the patient good. Pitt, however, amid all this European excitement could not be persuaded to leave London; so Farquhar contented himself with administering "the gentle bitters with Rhubarb & Magnesia." The gouty sensations, however, returned and at the beginning of December Pitt was at last persuaded to yield; on the seventh he went to Bath, and soon his colleagues knew that the illness was taking a serious turn.

The intention was that the patient should remain for six weeks till the opening of Parliament. But on December second was fought the battle of Austerlitz, in which Napoleon defeated the Russians and Austrians so utterly as to destroy all hopes of concluding the war for a long time; notwithstanding that Bonaparte's last fleet had been destroyed, and British overseas trade secured beyond all doubt. When the sorrowful news from Austerlitz reached Pitt, it was to give him a blow from which his vitality could never recover. Melville . . . Ulm . . . Nelson . . . Austerlitz—he could fight no longer; his nature flopped within him, he could not hold on to life. "Stunned indeed are we all by the continental news," wrote the Marquis of Buckingham on January 6, 1806, from Stowe. "I heard of Mr. Pitt yesterday that he is still very lame and is much beaten down by this news; and of the King I heard this day that he is well, but gloomy to a degree that has seriously alarmed all his family."* Truly Britain was passing through her dark dismal days with the loss of her Nelson and the incapacitation of Pitt, the dissolution of the coalition and the uncertainty of the future.

* "Dropmore Papers."

Pitt had become bereft of all longing to live. Weak, emaciated, with only dulness in those eyes that once were so exceptionally bright and animated; hollow-voiced, and giving the appearance of a dying man; low-spirited, and gouty in his left toe; scarcely eating any food and drinking only a little watered Madeira, he displayed symptoms which became alarming. Farquhar was sent for from London, and his coach came creaking down the Bath road. He arrived to find "a man much worn out," with a pulse generally from one hundred to one hundred and twenty. The waters had thrown out the gout, but the invalid was too weak to continue them. All he could now consume was asses' milk, and egg beaten in a teaspoonful of brandy. He was still reading despatches, but this was always followed by noticeable symptoms of disconcerting kind.

The only thing to do was to bring Pitt home, and on January ninth they started. To-day the traveler by road or rail thinks nothing of this short journey from Somerset, but during the wintry days at the beginning of 1806 it was a veritable via dolorosa on which to be jolted and pitched about in an indifferently sprung carriage. They left Bath at two P. M., and six hours later reached an inn at Marlborough, where the sick man passed a good night. Next day the journey was resumed, and by seven P. M. they were in Reading. On the following morning the third stage was begun, so that by seven P. M. the invalid after three days' traveling was finally back in his house at Putney Heath. Here his devoted niece, Lady Hester, was awaiting him, but was shocked when she beheld the wasted appearance that had come over him since December. Stanhope has left us the story that, after Pitt had entered the house and was proceeding down a passage to his bedroom, he observed a map of

Europe. Turning to his niece, he bade her, "Roll up that map. It will not be wanted these ten years."*

On the next day there was a consultation at Putney between Doctor Reynolds, Doctor Baillie and Sir Walter. The latter made Pitt promise not to open any more letters. The Premier's faithful friend Tomline, Bishop of Lincoln, who was there, took charge of all correspondence and remained in the house. With the mere exertion of dressing himself the poor frail Pitt's pulse rose to one hundred and thirty,† but on the thirteenth Pitt went out in his coach for a drive. That same day he received Lords Hawkesbury and Castlereagh, both Secretaries of State. He saw Lord Wellesley, and also Lord Chatham. It was unfortunate that official business was so pressing as to necessitate tiring interviews, and Pitt was made worse. "Sir Walter," he admitted to Farquhar, "I have been compelled to disobey your injunctions: I have done too much. When in conversation with persons upon important business, I felt suddenly as if I had been cut in two."

On the fifteenth he had become so ill that Farquhar slept both this and the next night at Putney. On the sixteenth Pitt finally took to his bed, but next day seemed better and was able to consume some chicken broth. On the eighteenth this improvement was maintained, so that Bishop Tomline was in a position to inform Lord Grenville, "his countenance is improved . . . it is the first day that there has been any amendment at all since he returned from Bath." It was a false hope, for on the Sunday (twentieth) Pitt was in the utmost danger, with a

* *Life*, IV, p. 369.

† I am indebted, for the details of Pitt's last hours, principally to the accounts left by Sir Walter Farquhar, by Bishop Tomline, and to letters in the "Lonsdale MSS," as well as among the "Dropmore MSS."

pulse of one hundred and thirty; and while they were moving him the night before in a blanket from his bed to couch, he fainted. There was another consultation between the doctors on the following afternoon, but the case was now hopeless, and on the night of the twenty-first the condition became even worse. His strength was fast ebbing.

"My own idea of Mr. Pitt's situation," wrote Tomline, "had, from my first arrival at Putney from Bath, been such that I had continually pressed the physicians to permit me to call his attention to religious duties, and to desire him to give instructions respecting his affairs and papers; but to my surprise, they constantly affirmed that they saw no danger, and refused their sanction." When Farquhar arrived on the twenty-second he found that Pitt had passed rather a better night, and his pulse this morning was improved. "I was in his room just now," Tomline scribbled a note to Lord Grenville, "and he knew me, and I hope he will presently be able to receive some comfort from me"; but then the Bishop had to add, "Mr. Pitt has declined to see me just at present for the purpose of my praying with him."

From Putney Farquhar went into London and called, by appointment, on the Prince of Wales to inform him of the true state. The Premier could not last many more hours, and now the physician gave permission for Pitt to see any one he pleased; medical aid could do no more. The dying man wished only to have the Bishop, who found him weaker. "I immediately went to his bedside and told him that I found it incumbent upon me to acquaint him that his situation was considered very precarious, and therefore I requested leave to read prayers and administer the Sacrament to him."

Pitt presently answered, " 'I fear I have, like many

other men, neglected prayer too much to have any ground to hope that it can be efficacious on a death-bed, but,'" [says Tomline] "rising in his bed as he spoke and clasping his hands together with the utmost fervour and devotion, 'I throw myself entirely . . . upon the mercy of God through the merits of Christ.' . . . He then, after a little preparatory conversation, joined me in prayer with calm and humble piety. . . . When I again proposed to administer the Sacrament, he desired to rest a little . . . and I hoped for another opportunity. . . . That opportunity, however, did not occur. He soon became much worse."

At ten P. M. Farquhar sent Lord Grenville a message that "Mr. Pitt is worse—not a ray of hope left." And just before midnight the Bishop also wrote to Grenville: "I talked with Mr. Pitt for some time upon religious subjects and found his mind in a state very much to my satisfaction; he expressed great humility and trust in the mercy of God, and said that he should die in perfect charity and peace with all mankind. He attempted afterwards to write, but could not; he desired me to write down some particulars which he mentioned; he signed them after hearing them read by me; and indeed he also read them himself, in the presence of Sir W. Farquhar and three servants." He made Tomline his literary executor, and his last words to his old Cambridge tutor were: "I cannot sufficiently thank you for all your kindness to me throughout life."

At four-thirty next morning the soul of William Pitt passed away on the anniversary of that day when twenty-five years ago he had taken his seat as member of the House of Commons. One of those present at the bedside remarked that Pitt "burnt out quietly and went off without a groan or struggle." "Poor fellow," wrote that "Prince

of Gossips," the Earl of Essex to Viscount Lowther, "I hear he made a will, but God knows can have had little to leave of anything." That was true enough, but on February third, Parliament unanimously resolved to pay off his debts with forty thousand pounds. No other statesman, except his father, Chatham, had ever received such a posthumous act of gratitude. Parliament also followed the precedent of his father by according a public funeral, and on February 22, 1806, the younger Pitt was laid to rest in Westminster Abbey. To his three nieces pensions were granted, and statues began to be erected, of which that in the London Guildhall, another in the Senate House, Cambridge, and that by Chantrey on the south side of Hanover Square, London, are best known.

Pitt's "early habit of the too free use of Wine," remarked Farquhar, "operated unquestionably to weaken the Powers of the Stomach," though there was aggravation in a "constitutional tendency to gout." Nor would retirement have prolonged life. The last words of the dying Premier were, "Oh, my country! How I leave my country!" They were the sigh of a broken-hearted man, who saw his greatest love again in dire peril and destined to endure another long war. No wonder that George III was so deeply affected at losing the pilot who had brought Britain through one terrific storm. Pitt's second Administration had lasted but twenty months, yet during that brief period he had done an immense amount of work toward counteracting Bonaparte's efforts.

By procuring a supply of small craft to annoy the enemy, if the French were to attempt crossing the Channel; by close regard for every department of the Admiralty, and thus preparing for Trafalgar; by inspiring sound naval strategy at sea and adequate local defensive measures at home; Pitt had ruined Napoleon's threat of

invasion. The weak feature lay in the paucity of British military strength abroad, and the reliance on unreliable continental coalition. "In Lord Nelson we lost a right hand of the kingdom," wrote John Stonard to Lord Lowther on February twenty-third, "but in Mr. Pitt we have lost the acting soul, the presiding reason of the State."* "Mr. Pitt," remarked the same correspondent, "seemed to have been given by heaven to the nation in order to save it, and he has performed that high office in more instances than one." And if we were to search for one word which would exactly sum up Pitt's public work, we should well discover it in his title as saviour.

He found his country impoverished, and he saved her from exhaustion; he rescued her from the abyss of bankruptcy and left her with a mercantile prosperity which had (in the words of Lord Auckland) grown to a "prodigious and increasing extent." He protected Britain from anarchy, established once more its public credit, overhauled its national finance, lifted up its naval glory, stemmed the tide of Revolution that was sweeping across Europe, inspired a new confidence in kingship, broke the dangerous power of Court intrigue, set his mind against corruption and filching of national funds. Every department of the Government became conscious of his integrity and animation. If he infringed the liberties of the people during the time of war, he was justified in this caution. If Catherine of Russia beat him in diplomacy yet he was too much for Napoleon, not merely because the great military genius failed to appreciate the value and use of sea power, but because Pitt filled his countrymen with a determination not to be bullied, not to yield. Pitt's own words were that England had saved herself by her own exertions, and the rest of Europe would be saved by her example.

* "Lonsdale MSS."

It was Pitt himself who taught England to exert her full energy and preserve her optimism. No Elizabethan ever was more filled with the belief in his country's ability and ultimate success, nor gave her such fortitude in the long hours of her trial. Except for Pitt the nation would have failed. Six months after his death, and sufficiently at a distance from events to understand their values, Lord Melville* added up what seemed to him the outstanding features of the great Premier's achievement. They may be summarized as follows, and are the expression of a statesman in close touch with affairs all through this period:

(1) Pitt's struggle to preserve the constitution, particularly in respect of the India Bill, which completely redeemed India from impending ruin.

(2) Pitt's immediate attention to the distracted state of the country's revenues.

(3) His interposition in favor of Holland against the tyranny and Revolutionary principles of France.

(4) His effecting a commercial treaty with France.

(5) His having maintained British national pride and honor in the contest with Spain regarding the Nootka Sound episode.

(6) His noble support given to the constitution and sovereignty during the King's illness.

(7) His exertions over a tract of years to save the country from French Revolutionary principles.

It was Pitt's good fortune to go out of life just before the tide of his ability and usefulness began to ebb. The whole of his career was contained in one full flood, ending at a high water which covered a vast area. There was no painful sight of weakening strength slowly frittering itself away; there were no long interludes as had

* "Lonsdale MSS."

characterized the last period of Chatham's existence. The younger William Pitt arrived on the English scene at the right time, when a young mind was needed to sympathize with the changes that were coming over political, social, industrial and commercial England. An older man would have been not able to adapt himself, nor would he have had any grounding in the new science of economics. Pitt became, so to say, head of a business which in a few years was so vast and world-wide that it was beyond the powers of any but a man full of vigor, imagination and financial ability. At the end of the eighteenth century, instead of being the headpiece of a poor nation, that had almost lost all hope, Pitt was controlling a huge organization which had an income of one hundred millions sterling, with property in most parts of the globe. And while it is true that he increased the size of the peerage by fifty per cent., partly because of the Irish union, yet it was principally owing to his desire for obtaining from the new rich a valuable support necessary in carrying on the war to a successful end. Thus he gave the country prosperity and then used that prosperity to help the nation toward further improvement.

The elder Pitt's task was to establish and extend a colonial system; the younger Pitt had the duty of turning that into practical commercial profit, and thereby to build up a powerful Navy that would keep the routes for trade unobstructed. But Chatham was never confronted with those three mighty problems of Revolution, Naval Mutinies and Napoleon Bonaparte. Nor had the elder Pitt to bear the responsibility which always belongs to a transition period—when old and well-tried ideas are being scrapped in favor of modern theories. The earlier portraits of the younger Pitt show him with wig and knee-breeches; his later pictures reveal his head of natural

WILLIAM PITT

In his later days. From the remarkable bust by J. Nollekens in the National Gallery, London.

hair. Until Fox one day appeared at the House of Commons in top-boots and a great-coat, the customary attire in Parliament had been Court dress with sword; from about 1785 knee-breeches became out of fashion, and pantaloons were being worn with Hessian boots. And this was but the outward expression of a new age which had set in.

That reserved, silent, self-controlled young man who grew as England grew, whose greatness kept pace with her expansion, whose courage increased as her dangers threatened, had the loftiness of spirit, the reverence for the past, combined with an open-mindedness for considering new impressions; and these were just the qualities that were demanded in the transformation of England from purely agricultural to largely industrial outlook. It was because as a human being Pitt was so little known —outside a narrow circle of intimate friends—that the people looked on him as sacrosanct and almost godlike. It is one of the tragedies of history that men do not always see the results of the causes they have set to work. If, when Pitt was dying, he could have known that some day Napoleon would be condemned to exile and boredom at St. Helena away from arms and armies, then those last memorable words in grief for England would not have been uttered.

Pitt was rather a delicate plant, that had been forced to flower prematurely, and then to die before its time, but there was more beauty in it than was obvious to those who were never privileged to make a close approach. To most of his own countrymen William Pitt was not so much a human being as an abstract principle; to his closest friends he was beyond criticism. Thus, shortly after his death, when the matter of writing his biography was being discussed, and John Stonard was asked to under-

take the work, he considered that "it would ill become those who revere the memory of Mr. Pitt to hold up the little specks of mortal imperfection to the curiosity and scorn of enemies."

In life Pitt had impressed so many people with a sense of awe and fear, that these qualities were not altogether forgotten after he had passed away. His manner had the effect of making those who came into contact feel a sense of their inferiority, so that even the King was never quite at his ease as he was with Addington. On the other hand Pitt was ready of access when it was likely that the interview would be for the national good. While in Parliament he impressed every one by his authoritative manner, his perfect deportment, his dignified eloquence, his grave tone, or his cutting sarcasm; yet in the privacy of Walmer or Hollwood he was the witty, unassuming, urbane and good-humored individual. The still unbending seriousness vanished in the unselfish, lively and playful person, who possessed that wonderful faculty of being able for a while to dismiss Downing Street, State Papers and Westminster entirely from his mind.

His daily routine would generally find him breakfasting at nine, dining at five with usually a few guests. He would then retire to his room and work with his secretaries (unless Parliament were sitting) until midnight. His mornings were of course fully occupied with administrative duties; he preferred to arrange his own papers and personally answer those favor-begging letters which are the bane of a Minister's existence. Tomline, who was associated with him so closely and studied him in every period of Pitt's career says: "He had a peculiar sweetness and benevolence of dispositon, a kindness of heart, an unaffected ease, frankness and simplicity, and a natural flow of spirits, which made his extraordinary

intellectual powers as pleasant and fascinating in the common intercourse of life as they were commanding in the performance of official duties."

Lord Grenville, writing to the Principal of Brasenose, Oxford, referred to Pitt as "a warm friend to the Established Church." Certainly Pitt was one of invincible rectitude, a man of his word, a true servant of the public. Tomline bears witness that "throughout life religion was in him an habitual principle, influencing and governing every feeling of his mind, and every part of his conduct, public and private." And when Pitt passed away that winter's morning, the effect on England was like the extinguishing of a beacon light that had shown as a guide through the murky gloom of war. A silence, solemn and awful, seemed to settle down over King and people as they bewailed the loss of their greatest statesman at a time when the funeral of Nelson was still vividly before their eyes. Within three brief months the country had been robbed of those two master-men, on whom reliance was placed to defeat Napoleon's imperial plans. Could England carry on as before? Were the disasters of Ulm and Austerlitz indicative that the country was in for another long period of stress and turmoil, finally to become Bonaparte's servant? Would it not be well to make peace with France, and carry on those progressive measures which Pitt had interrupted after the French Revolution had stayed his hand?

But the time of mourning passed, Grenville and Fox tried to unite the ablest men from each party in the Ministry of "All the Talents." The latter was soon to follow his old parliamentary rival to the grave, but amid the rare plants, the enchanted glades and shady walks of his stately home, Lord Grenville could come forth from his library of leather-bound books to meditate on

the kinsman he had deserted and to wonder whether after all these years England could exist without a Pitt, or whether it was true in practise that no one man was indispensable to the State. The nineteenth century, with all its unperceived possibilities, had dawned, but there still remained over from the past those unsettled questions of Emancipation, Parliamentary Reform, Slave Trade, though most pressing of all was this legacy of Napoleonic peril. Another nine years must pass before Waterloo could bring a lasting peace, yet even that must be preceded by another war with America which would certainly have grieved the heart of William Pitt. Perhaps it was well that he did not survive to see this most regrettable estrangement.

THE END

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